DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 437 535 CE 079 615

AUTHOR Maginn, Andrew; Dench, Sally
TITLE Labour Market Information for Higher Education: A Guide. IES Report 363.
INSTITUTION Sussex Univ., Brighton (England). Inst. for Employment Studies.
ISBN ISBN-1-85184-292-6
PUB DATE 2000-00-00
NOTE 79p.
AVAILABLE FROM Grantham Book Services, Isaac Newton Way, Alma Park Industrial Estate, Grantham NG31 9SD, United Kingdom (15 British pounds).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Colleges; *Educational Planning; Foreign Countries; *Information Sources; *Information Utilization; *Labor Market; *Occupational Information; Postsecondary Education; Strategic Planning
IDENTIFIERS *Great Britain

ABSTRACT

This guide is written for people in British higher education institutions (HEIs) who use, or would like to use, regional and local labor market information (LMI) in strategic, operational, and business planning. It is also designed for agencies who commission and produce regional and local labor market, skills, and economic reports. Chapter 1 details for whom the guide is intended and provides background on why LMI has become more important to HEIs. Chapter 2 describes what LMI is, with examples of the sorts of information HIE planners need. It is a fairly basic description, designed for those who are new to labor market analysis or who do not use LMI often. Chapter 3 reviews the main reasons why HEIs use LMI, with examples and recommendations on good practice. Chapter 4 explains a typical regional or local labor market report from the perspective of an HEI planner. Detailed recommendations are made, which HEIs can use to improve the relevance of LMI they receive from local and regional organizations. Chapter 5 reviews briefly the material currently available at national, regional, and local levels and then makes recommendations on which sources are essential and others that can provide a useful background. Appendixes include a glossary of terms and acronyms, a list of 44 resource organizations, and illustrations of higher education sector data. (YLB)

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Report 363

LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

A Guide

the **Institute**
for **Employment**
Studies

Labour Market Information for Higher Education: a Guide

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Published by:

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http://www.employment-studies.co.uk

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 1 85184 292 6

Printed in Great Britain by College Hill Press

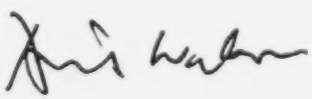
Foreword

'Labour market information' is one of the footballs that higher education institutions and employers' groups have kicked backwards and forwards for decades. The HEIs have frequently been frustrated by the employers' lack of precision in defining their need, their readiness to act in ways other than they speak in assessing and taking on new graduates, and their tendency to seek to solve the problems of yesterday's skills gaps. Reciprocally, the employers cannot understand the universities' long lead time in developing and changing courses, the apparent unwillingness of academics to engage with the real issues of the marketplace, and the apparent failure of graduates to 'hit the ground running'.

At the turn of the century, the stakes have been raised concerning the national and regional economic role of universities and colleges. Society expects an economic dividend for its major investment in the recent expansion of the UK higher education. Local and regional frameworks (especially through the RDA's) have been set for economic competitiveness, not least through the supply of highly skilled people and the transfer of knowledge. Influential reports, including that of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (the Dearing Report) have emphasised the challenge to HEIs to be engines of social and economic regeneration.

'Work-readiness' and labour market responsiveness, in their widest senses, are at the heart of this challenge. However, as this guide underlines, the devil is in the detail. HEIs need to become more confident and skilled in terms of the appraisal of employer requirements, for mid-career updating and continuous professional development as well as for preparing new workforce entrants. They also need to get involved in the specification and design of labour market surveys, to ensure that they are appropriately penetrating and timely.

The key, as in many similar areas of policy and practice, is that of effective partnership. This project has brought both the producers and the users of LMI for higher education together in a pioneering way. The commitment of the contributors, from both sides, as well as of the project leader and authors of this guide, has been exemplary. On behalf of the steering committee I commend their work for immediate practical application.



Professor Sir David Watson
Director, University of Brighton
Chair of Project Steering Committee

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank all those who have contributed their time and expertise towards the preparation of this Guide. Almost two hundred people in HEIs, TECs and other organisations have participated in the development work and research leading up to this Guide. Unfortunately we cannot thank them all by name in the space available here.

We are grateful to the committee that so ably steered this project and provided generous support and expert advice to the team. The committee was chaired by **Professor Sir David Watson** (University of Brighton). The other members, in no particular order, were: **Martin Elms, Simon Antcliff** and **Frances Blow** (DfEE Higher Education Quality and Employability Division); **Martin Towers** and **Christine Doubleday** (Heart of England TEC); **Helen James** (University of Brighton); **Cathy Lambert** and **Lindsey Major** (Oxford Brookes University); **Stephen Court** (Association of University Teachers); **Professor John Humphreys** (University of Greenwich); **Janice Lawson** and **Andrew Alden** (Government Office South East); **David Anderson-Evans** (Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals); **Steven Windmill** (Thames Valley Enterprise); **Ellen Power** and **Kay Pennycott** (Sussex Enterprise) and **Richard Pearson** (Institute for Employment Studies). **John Ross** (University of Sussex) made a double contribution by serving on the steering committee and also undertaking a survey on behalf of the project team.

Dr Alan Anie (University of North London), **Fiona Cushlow** and **Zoe Young** (of the CONTACT consortium of Greater Manchester HEIs) and **Dr Denise Morrey** (Oxford Brookes University) delivered papers at a national project workshop held in July 1999. Their work and thinking has been immensely valuable to us in producing this Guide and in ensuring that it draws on development and research work in diverse regions and institutions. **Dr Mark Ramsden** (CONTACT) provided detailed comments on a draft. **Jim Hillage** and **Helen Connor** (Institute for Employment Studies) and **Sue Otter** (DfEE adviser) helped to run the national project workshop.

At the Institute for Employment Studies, contributions were also made by our colleagues **Peter Bates, Nick Jagger, Jenny Kodz, Emma Pollard, Matthew Williams, Andy Davidson, Emma Hart** and **Louise Paul**.

Martin Towers (Heart of England TEC) and **Mark Froud** (Sussex Enterprise) advised on TEC approaches to market analysis and were very generous with their time. **Rama Thirunamachandran** and **Claire Warnes** (HEFCE) provided advice and commented on a draft of this Guide. **Jonathan Waller** and **Jo Roper** of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) provided data and advice.

Oliver Hawkins (Northbrook College) and staff in two Sussex further education colleges provided additional information, insights and advice so that this higher education Guide could also be of use to the further education sector.

The project evaluator, **Georgia Siora** (GHK Economics & Management) made many helpful suggestions during the life of the project as well as preparing a summative report.

Last but by not least, around forty individuals from across England worked hard at the project workshop in July 1999. They helped us turn early findings from three regional projects into the national good practice and recommendations this guide proposes. The workshop participants are named in Annex D and we would like to thank them all for their contribution.

Andrew Maginn and **Sally Dench**
Institute for Employment Studies

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Summary and Recommendations

Summary

This Guide is designed to help those within HEIs who use, or would like to use, labour market information (LMI) in planning activity.

It will be of particular use to those involved in strategic, operational, business or course planning, at any level. However, it will also be of assistance to those involved in:

- providing careers information, guidance and counselling
- market research on student demand, *eg* for continuing professional development provision, or new initiatives to widen access
- developing curricula over a wide range of subjects at various levels
- developing departmental or school plans and bids
- liaising with organisations like Regional Development Agencies, Lifelong Learning Partnerships and TECs
- developing services for local companies.

About this Guide (Chapter One) — details who the Guide has been written for, and provides background on why labour market information (LMI) has become more important to HEIs.

What is LMI? (Chapter Two) — describes what LMI is, with examples of the sorts of information HEI planners need. It is a fairly basic description, designed for those who are new to labour market analysis, or who do not use LMI often.

How HEIs use LMI (Chapter Three) — reviews the main reasons why HEIs use LMI, with examples and also some recommendations on good practice.

Regional and Local LMI: what should a planner ask for? (Chapter Four) — unpicks a typical regional or local labour market report, from the perspective of an HEI planner. Detailed recommendations are made which HEIs can use to improve the relevance of LMI they receive from local and regional organisations.

Essential LMI sources (Chapter Five) — briefly reviews the material currently available at national, regional and local level, and then

makes recommendations on which sources are essential, and others that can provide a useful background. Somebody involved in planning in each HEI ought to be aware of, and monitoring, the type of material we designate as 'essential'.

A **Glossary of Terms and Acronyms** is provided in Annex A.

A **list of useful contacts** is provided in Annex B.

Illustrations of data referred to in the main chapters are given in Annex C.

Participants in the July 1999 project workshop, who helped us frame the good practice contained within this Guide, are listed in Annex D.

Recommendations

Throughout this Guide we make recommendations for HEI planners, although they are also relevant to others within HEIs and partner agencies. The recommendations are drawn together here, with page references if you want to refer to their context.

We make two main types of recommendation, concerning:

- how LMI is used within HEIs, and
- how HEIs obtain better and more relevant regional and local LMI.

The latter set of recommendations may be as useful to research staff in RDAs, TECs and new bodies like local Learning and Skills Councils as they are to the primary audience of this Guide, (planners within HEIs).

Recommendations for using LMI within HEIs

R **Map the main LMI resources of your institution (page10)**

Identify what could form the contents of a central 'pool' of LMI, *eg* reports, data or perhaps the LMI that is used in funding bids. Careers services sometimes possess the most comprehensive LMI within an institution, and yet are often overlooked in this area.

In addition to written material and data, also consider resources such as staff expertise and experience. A list of staff with expertise or experience in an aspect of LMI can be very useful. In drawing up such a list, don't forget units that exist largely or exclusively through external funding bids — they are often adept at producing labour market analyses. And don't forget your Careers Service.

R **Monitor the LMI capabilities and outputs of bid-dependent units (page 16)**

Keep a close eye on the outputs, capabilities and contacts of peripheral/discrete fund-raisers within the institution. Where they possess labour market analysis to support new initiatives this can often be drawn upon and 'mainstreamed' for wider use. This can save considerable time and duplication of effort within an institution.

R **Evaluate how LMI has and has not been used in the past (page 15)**

An effective way of assessing LMI needs is to evaluate where and how LMI could have improved the last or current strategic plan. Scrutinise the plan and ask such questions as:

- could more use of LMI have improved the plan, for example by avoiding a mistake or foreseeing a problem?
- did the plan draw on LMI to inform decisions that turned out to be well judged, or one that was a palpable error?
- if demand fell away more than expected for some courses, could market research or LMI have helped predict that? For courses that outperformed expectations, was there some research or LMI that could have anticipated this?

An exercise like this is not an academic one: by examining how LMI has been used in the past (and not used), an HEI can help define its future LMI needs and improve its use of LMI.

R **Take a lead in dissemination of local/regional LMI within the institution (page 21)**

Where local/regional labour market assessments do address the interests of higher education (and currently most do not), it is important to make maximum use of this information.

Internal dissemination of reports is vital and can stimulate a dialogue about labour market responsiveness. For example, an annual local or regional assessment may consistently report upon certain graduate skill deficiencies, or a need for particular key skills. In this instance, HEI planners should have copied the report to departmental heads, highlighting the key generic issues. At the start of the next planning round the planners can then consider asking each department if and how its plans will address those issues. (*See also a later recommendation concerning report summaries.*)

Recommendations to HEIs on obtaining better and more relevant local and regional LMI

We collate here our detailed recommendations on how staff in HEIs can obtain more relevant and higher quality local and regional LMI. Currently, some HEIs are luckier than others in terms of the quality

of analysis their local partner agencies provide. Our recommendations should ideally be considered jointly with providers of LMI, for example: RDAs; TECs; and, once they are established, the new local Learning & Skills Councils.

What follows is not a checklist: each recommendation should be considered against your needs and the type of local and regional LMI you currently receive. Above all else, a constructive and realistic dialogue is required between those commissioning/ producing labour market reports, and those who use or would like to use their reports.

R **Seek in-house advice (page 29)**

Ask an in-house expert to critique local/regional labour market reports for their quality, relevance and possible implications for the institution. Planners, geographers or economists may be particularly useful in this role.

R **Talk (more) to those who commission and produce local/regional labour market reports (page 23)**

All HEIs should influence the contents of economic and labour market reports, so that higher education interests and needs are addressed in such reports. Ways of exerting influence include:

- participation in TEC or RDA-led networks that consider economic and labour market issues
- inviting TEC or RDA researchers to participate in higher education networks that consider the economic role of HEIs
- offering to join advisory committees that assist some TECs shape their research programme
- offering to contribute information about your institution and the higher education sector, towards a future report; also, offering to comment on drafts of such reports.

It is worth keeping up to date on which colleagues have relevant contacts (*eg* with TEC and RDA researchers). There is usually more contact between an HEI and a TEC than may be appreciated, and a quick email survey/call for evidence (*eg* 'has anyone had contact with the local TEC/RDA *etc.* in the last year?') may reveal some surprises.

Equip those who have the most contact/influence with producers of LMI a copy of this Guide and agree with them your priorities for influence.

R **Ask for detailed summary information (page 26)**

Those providing regional and local labour market and economic assessments should be asked to include a detailed summary of somewhere around six to eight sides. Research shows that this will help ensure maximum take-up and use of LMI within HEIs, and that shorter 'executive summaries' are of limited use.

R **Ensure that higher education is acknowledged (page 26)**

Regional and local assessments usually list organisations who the authors hope the report will influence, or who are important to the economy and labour market. If HEIs are omitted from such lists, the authors should be asked if that could be rectified in future editions. A positive approach is to offer information about your institution and the higher education sector so that this could be drawn on in a future report.

R **Request local/national comparisons (page 27)**

A local/regional assessment that does not compare local statistics with the regional and national level is almost certainly incomplete. While most TEC local reports don't have this weakness, a few do.

Remind those producing such reports that your interests cover all geographic levels — local, regional, national and often international — and that you need direct comparison of data for different geographic areas wherever possible.

R **Gather some good examples to share with your LMI provider (page 28)**

A few TECs and other producers of local labour market reports fail to include a useful contextual section at the beginning of reports. It may be worth showing them a report from elsewhere, explaining why such an approach would be useful to you, and asking if they might be interested in producing something like that in the future.

Local reports produced by consultancies such as the Policy Research Institute of Leeds Metropolitan University, or Prism Research, will usually be good examples to show what can be done in this area; these tend to have thoughtful contextual and analytical sections. However, there are many other consultancies and report writers who also produce good examples.

R **Identify the type of economic and business trend information you need (page 30)**

A good quality local or regional assessment will show how the changing business environment, business structures/organisation and technology are changing the demand for employment and skills. If reports for your area lack this, then they may be incomplete as assessments of labour market and skills issues. You should identify what information would be most useful and talk with the provider about ways of enhancing future editions.

As recommended earlier, it may help if you gather examples of reports from other areas that cover such issues successfully.

R **Ask for more and better survey trend data (page 33)**

Those producing local and regional LMI reports need to be made aware that HEIs are looking for reliable evidence of long-term trends, as it may take up to five years for changes in course provision to have an impact on the labour market.

Annual local/regional assessments often draw heavily on surveys of employers and households. However, frequent technical changes with aspects such as the sample, coding and question wording can make it impossible to make valid year-on-year comparisons of data. Some regular TEC surveys have been badly damaged by such discontinuities.

When talking to those who commission and produce annual assessments, stress how important it is for you to have consistent time-trend data.

R **Use sectoral profiles to guide planning discussions with departments (page 33)**

Sectoral profiles found in local/regional assessments rarely provide the detail required for curriculum development. Lecturing staff need far more detailed knowledge of the relevant sectors, and will often have their own national sources of this.

However, the broad information found in local/regional assessments can provide a planner with a useful background about issues and trends in a sector. This background can be used in discussion with an academic who seeks to change a particular course.

When reading such sections of local/regional assessments, a planner should be framing questions to ask a particular school concerning their own provision, *eg* 'how are we responding to the increasing demand for scientific professionals among the growing pharmaceutical sector of our region?'.

A standard 'checklist' of questions can be developed to structure such discussions with all departments.

It is very important to let those who produce local/regional reports know if their material has been useful in curriculum development and planning — encouragement and positive feedback could result in an even more useful report next year.

R **Encourage national questions to be asked locally (page 35)**

The skills data typically used in regional and local reports tends to be survey based, and therefore not very forward looking.

HEIs should encourage TECs or others commissioning local or regional research to attempt to replicate (and boost) national survey research, for example by asking some identical questions to the

Skills in Britain national survey. That way it is easier to obtain local/national comparisons.

R **Make sure you have enough supply side data (page 36)**

There is a general need for more supply side data than is usually provided in most regional and local assessments. Such data can inform a range of decisions, including the location of facilities and policies to widen access.

HEIs should express to providers of local/regional LMI their need for more data and analysis, especially that relating to age cohort size, educational participation, and deprivation.

R **Ensure that those producing local/regional assessments understand the role of higher education (page 37)**

TEC local/regional assessments provide details of basic and intermediate vocational qualification and skills issues. However, they tend to neglect discussion of higher vocational and graduate level qualifications and skills, and of the graduate labour market. This bias reflects the traditional focus of TEC spending and interest in the area of vocational education and training.

HEIs should make sure that those producing local and regional LMI reports are aware of their needs. Planners should, for example, recommend to such providers of LMI that they draw on data from HESA and other higher education sector sources. In this way higher and graduate level skills and labour market issues can be properly addressed.

In Annex C we show some illustrative tables drawn from a report that integrated issues of graduate education and labour market into a wider assessment of a regional labour market. These tables may be useful prompts for a discussion with your local/regional provider of LMI reports.

R **Forge closer links with LMI producers in local agencies (page 38)**

This final recommendations re-iterates a message we have already made. HEI planners should get as close as possible to the TEC research functions, and those of successor bodies and the RDAs. HEIs will only obtain the local and regional LMI they need by working collaboratively with other agencies to make their needs and interests understood.

We believe that some investment in time and patience may lead to an improvement in the quality and relevance of local and regional LMI within a few years.

1. About This Guide

This chapter explains:

- who this Guide has been written for (Section 1.1)
- why LMI is becoming more important to HEIs (Section 1.2).

1.1 Who the Guide is for

LMI is used for many different purposes and at a range of levels within institutions. In Chapter Three we outline the main ways in which LMI is used; these uses of LMI are summarised in the box below.

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Examples: LMI is used to

- aid strategic planning processes and decisions, including the opening or closure of courses and facilities
- inform operational and business planning, for example in bids to HEFCE for funds, and decisions about where growth or decline in numbers allocation should take place
- inform and evaluate new initiatives, such as policies to widen access
- ensure that careers advice (to students and graduates) is topical, accurate and comprehensive and that such LMI is more widely exploited
- monitor the appropriateness of industry contacts – *eg* are there emerging industries with which the institution should strengthen its links?
- aid strategic marketing and market research, and the promotion and targeting of services
- develop the curriculum to better suit the demands and needs of employers.

Many individuals will have an involvement in the above, in central teams, schools and departments. This Guide aims to help anyone who uses LMI; however, it is geared **particularly to the needs of non-LMI experts in planning teams or units**.

1.2 Why LMI has become more important

Labour Market Information (LMI) is becoming more important for HEIs, and there is a growing need for information about regional and local areas. The factors driving this trend are well known, but across the board there is a growing need for senior HEI managers to explain how their own institution is adapting to such forces, especially to their own governing body and key funding agencies, such as HEFCE and the Teacher Training Agency (TTA).

Quality and employability issues

Funding is still heavily skewed towards 'inputs' rather than 'outcomes'. However, the growth of league tables increases the pressure on institutions to demonstrate the quality of the education they offer and the employability and labour market success of alumni. Funding follows students, and student choice (of institution and course) is influenced by the type of career prospective students (and their families) believe the course will equip them for.

Graduates are now produced by a wider range of institutions, in many more course and subject combinations, than ever before. Employers are increasingly anxious to obtain what they regard as 'graduate calibre' recruits with relevant workplace capabilities and (sometimes) skills.

The 'employability' of graduates has become a major issue and emphasises the need for HEIs to interpret and balance employer requirements. LMI is an important tool with which HEIs can understand employer requirements.

Scale

The expansion of higher education during the 1990s has given the sector a more significant role in the labour market. HEIs are important drivers of economic development and their role in stimulating local and regional growth is increasingly acknowledged. LMI can help all the concerned agencies understand the important role of HEIs within their regional and local economies.

Another result of the growth of higher education is that HEIs have inevitably become more closely tied into the mainstream education system and so need a closer understanding of demographic and other trends affecting future student numbers.

Changing graduate labour market

The way in which new graduates are absorbed in the labour market has changed radically. National mass recruitment schemes

have broken down and non-traditional graduate recruiters account for a higher proportion of first graduate jobs. Small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) have become a more significant source of employment for graduates.

HEIs and students alike need a better understanding of who the recruiters of the future will be, and their needs. It has become more important for HEIs to understand trends in graduate recruitment and utilisation, with LMI being a prime source of such intelligence.

Access and sub-degree level courses

For the foreseeable future, much growth in higher education will be focussed on sub-degree level provision, and new services that widen access to those currently not participating in higher education, especially those from deprived areas and lower socio-economic groups.

HEIs need an understanding of their catchment areas (*eg* in terms of social and demographic characteristics) in order to widen access and participation, and address policies of agencies such as HEFCE. LMI is a key resource for this.

Regional and local catchment areas

A larger proportion of students now study at an institution within their local area or region. The reasons for this are widely known: for example, the growing numbers of mature and part-time students. Other factors are thought to be the introduction of student loans and reduced benefit levels for students, all of which have increased the proportion of costs borne directly by individual students and their families or partners.

Research shows that students studying within their home region are more likely to seek and obtain work within their home region upon graduation. Once again, there is a role for LMI in helping HEIs and others understand the destinations of graduates.

Evidence required by accreditation, verification and funding bodies

Agencies responsible for accreditation, verification and quality assurance are increasingly assessing the extent to which employability issues (such as key skills) are addressed in curriculum design. This has led to an increased need for published LMI by those involved in curriculum design, to supplement their other knowledge of employer needs.

The increased use of competition and bidding, as opposed to allocation of funds, means that HEIs increasingly have to 'prove' the case, often using LMI as evidence.

2. What is LMI?

This chapter describes:

- the purpose of labour market analysis (Section 2.1)
- what a labour market is (Section 2.2)
- the main types of LMI that are relevant to HEIs (Section 2.3)
- possible approaches to the co-ordination of LMI (Section 2.4).

Those already well-acquainted with LMI may wish to speed through to Chapter Four.

2.1 What is labour market analysis for?

Labour market information (LMI) helps us understand the nature of supply and demand for labour and skills. LMI takes many forms, including data and intelligence as well as other information. Everyone has their own understanding of the **difference between information and intelligence**: our own is that *'intelligence is information that has been interpreted so that it can be applied for practical use'*.

Labour market analysis adapts a supply-demand model of market operation. Within this model, supply is the human resource available to support workplace needs, and demand is the need of employers for workers and their skills. Skill gaps and unemployment are two of the most obvious signs of mismatch in the labour market, although there are many other measures.

However, the labour market is far more complicated than a simple supply and demand model suggests, and so too is labour market analysis.

Advanced economies boost the supply of skills in the labour market so as to stimulate more and 'better' demand. Evidence suggests that this enriching of workforce skills and capabilities allows many employers to become more productive and competitive than those in countries with lower educational and skill levels.

LMI is not just produced and analysed to help people respond to known needs or market failure: it also exists to inform the

investment in education and training that goes beyond the immediate or known requirements of the labour market.

2.2 What is a labour market?

Much difficulty in the use of LMI arises from misconceptions about what a labour market is, and of the myriad ways in which labour market issues can be identified and analysed. Over-simplified questions (*eg*, 'tell me about the main issues and trends in the labour market') often lead to wrong as well as over-simplified answers.

A labour market can be said to exist where there is willingness on the part of at least one person to sell his or her labour or where there is willingness on the part of another to hire labour. The two don't have to go together — if this fails to happen we say the market is not operating, or that it is misfunctioning.

All jobs require an element of capability or skill, albeit with variation in the level or nature of difficulty involved. It follows that transactions for labour are also transactions for skills.

When we describe a labour market we are also describing a set of relationships: between those who seek to sell their labour and those who seek to hire labour; and also competitive relations within these groups — *eg* employer competing against employer for labour, and worker competing against worker for jobs.

A labour market can be very small, potentially involving just two or maybe a handful of individuals, but this is now very rare. In practical terms we normally perceive a labour market as comprising large aggregations of individuals and employers, and here there are convenient groupings that are applied. Three particularly important types of labour market are shown here.

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Examples of the three major types of labour market:

geographical labour markets – *eg* covering an international, national, regional or local area

occupational labour markets – *eg* for hairdressers or engineers or lecturers

industrial or sectoral labour markets – *eg* for the printing industry or agriculture or the higher education sector.

None of the above types of labour market exists independently from the others — everywhere is somewhere, and all jobs can be classified both by occupation and the industry in which they exist.

There are other types of labour market, for example we can examine the labour markets for jobs at a particular **hierarchical level**, be it professional, managerial, associate professional,

technical, skilled, semi-skilled or (to use the unfortunate LMI misnomer) 'unskilled' *etc.* These levels constitute the basis for distinct labour markets: for example, we are able to describe long-term labour market trends of growth in demand for managers and the decline in demand for semi-skilled labour.

Alongside the 'levels' that can comprise a labour market there are some that are delineated by **qualification level**: for example, the graduate labour market (usually meaning the market for new graduates), or the market for 'unskilled' labour, where supply is mostly by those with few or no formal qualifications.

Another important type of labour market worth noting here is the one pertaining to **individual personal characteristics**: such features as age, sex, disability, ethnic group *etc.* Hence, we can talk of a labour market for young people, for women or men, for black or white people *etc.*

Labour market analysis based on personal characteristics often reveals relative disadvantage and sometimes also evidence of discrimination.

2.3 Types and examples of LMI

There are various ways in which we can list the types and sources of LMI that may be useful for an HEI. In summary, there are six main types of LMI that are relevant to this Guide, and we briefly review these before highlighting two cross-cutting factors.

Information on supply

This covers the supply of labour and skills to the labour market, and addresses issues such as demographic trends and characteristics of the population, existing qualifications, and participation in education and training. Examples are:

- a report containing demographic forecasts from a county council planning department
- a study of the participation and labour market preferences of older people in the workforce
- a study of the motivation among individuals to participate in lifelong learning.

It is worth noting that data on student 'demand' for higher education is typically included under 'supply side' data in labour market analysis, and this terminology occasionally causes confusion for those new to LMI.

Information on demand

This covers the demand for skills and labour within the labour market, and is based largely on employment data and surveys of employer needs. Included in this type of LMI is information about the changing sectoral and occupational structure of employment, changing skills needed of graduates, emerging industries, the business support needs of small businesses, innovation and growth clusters and corridors. Examples are:

- a report from the DTI on the skills required to support innovation among small businesses
- a report by a professional institution or trade organisation on the skills employees require from new graduates
- the annual report of the DfEE Skill Needs In Britain survey of employers, or the annual survey of engineering companies produced by EMTA.

Assessments and synopses of LMI

These are reports which draw together supply and demand data to provide an overview of the labour market, nationally, or in a particular industry, or at regional or local level. Mismatch between supply and demand in the labour market is analysed, using such measures as unemployment, wage inflation, skill shortages or recruitment difficulties. Examples are:

- the annual labour market review of the DfEE's Skills & Enterprise Network
- an annual economic or labour market assessment by a Training and Enterprise Council or similar body
- reports from academics, voluntary or pressure groups into unemployment affecting people with disabilities.

Information and analysis concerning policy

Under this category we include reports concerning such issues as national policy on higher education, widening access, education targets, education-business links, regional and local policy initiatives. Such policy papers often include summaries of research findings, but a principal concern is to state how the agencies concerned plan to intervene in the labour market. Examples are:

- green and white papers from the DfEE concerning education, lifelong learning and training
- consultation papers and circulars from HEFCE and FEFC
- Regional Economic Strategies from Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) or corporate plans from TECs.

Information on higher and further education participation and outcomes

This is sector-specific or institution-specific data about applications to, participation in, and the results of that participation, in terms of qualifications and immediate destinations of graduates. Typically such data and reports are produced by higher education sector bodies such as UCAS, CIHE, HESA or HEFCE. (*Please see Glossary of Terms and Acronyms in Annex A.*)

However, there are more general 'LMI sources' that also provide detail on participation in higher education (*eg* the Labour Force Survey) and which are found in the general labour market assessments referred to earlier in this section. Examples are:

- UCAS data on higher education applications
- HESA data on graduate destinations.

Miscellaneous information

Much LMI will fall under this heading. There are often difficulties trying to separate out a particular topic or report into 'supply' or 'demand'. Equally, some reports from organisations like TECs and DfEE may mix research (description) and policy (analysis or prescription). For example, such reports may encourage readers to use a particular training product or quality standard and present research evidence to support that case.

There is also a lot of published research and information concerning skills, qualifications, and issues such as graduate self-employment. The boundaries of labour market analysis are flexible and as a discipline it merges with and overlaps many others. Examples are:

- evaluations of initiatives and programmes by DfEE
- reports on graduate self-employment commissioned by CIHE or DfEE
- comparative studies of university science parks in the UK and other countries.

There are two other factors that cut across all the above and which are of particular importance to using LMI within HEIs. The first concerns the extent to which LMI is formal or informal, and the second concerns the geographical area it relates to.

2.3.1 Unpublished and 'soft' information

Unpublished, 'soft' information, often gleaned in discussions and participation in networks, is as important as published (or 'hard') evidence. Examples are given in the box below.

Examples of 'soft' sources of LMI:

- discussions between an academic and an external examiner or verifier
- views on employer needs of a professional institution, eg in discussion between an academic and someone from a professional body
- serving on committees and local partnership groups
- information on local employers gained by employer liaison staff in careers services, or through student placements or industry liaison groups
- hearing about how key skills have been adapted in curriculum development, for example at a conference or seminar
- discussing how the institution might adapt to the imminent arrival of a major research and development facility in the area, with council economic development unit officers.

Sometimes such informal information will be spoken around a written document or paper, for example in the case of a conference paper or discussions about a local policy document. Soft information is often obtained in a form in which it can quite readily be used — for example, in the case of advice on industry needs from industry advisory boards for particular courses.

2.3.2 Geographic coverage

Much LMI is available at national, regional and local levels, although sometimes the data we need can only (and frustratingly) be found at one level. A relatively small amount of LMI is internationally comparable, although there are now some useful sources such as the European Labour Force Survey or from EU sponsored research, which often includes case study and survey research in a number of EU countries.

There are major issues about the extent to which various types of LMI are available (and comparable) at different geographic levels. These are discussed in later chapters.

2.4 Co-ordination of LMI

LMI will be found in many places within a typical HEI, in both central service departments (such as planning, marketing, CPD, careers) and within subject departments. The next chapter of this Guide explores the various ways in which that LMI is used.

Given the size and complexity of many HEIs it may be unrealistic to suggest that all this information should be co-ordinated or indexed. However, some institutions are examining whether greater co-ordination of LMI is possible. For example, one university is planning to create a central unit that will collate

general LMI (*eg* concerning matters such as key skills, employability, macro-economic trends, demographic data). This generic intelligence will complement the more subject-specific LMI held and used within individual subject departments and schools.

R

Map the main LMI resources of your institution

Identify what could form the contents of a central 'pool' of LMI, eg reports, data or perhaps the LMI that is used in funding bids. Careers services sometimes possess the most comprehensive LMI within an institution, and yet are often overlooked in this area.

In addition to written material and data, also consider resources such as staff expertise and experience. A list of staff with expertise or experience in an aspect of LMI can be very useful. In drawing up such a list, don't forget units that exist largely or exclusively through external funding bids – they are often adept at producing labour market analyses. And don't forget your Careers Service.

3. How HEIs Use LMI

This chapter looks at the use of LMI within HEIs to:

- aid strategic planning processes and decisions, including the opening or closure of courses and facilities (Section 3.1)
- inform operational and business planning, for example in bids to HEFCE for funds, and decisions about where growth or decline in numbers allocation should take place (Section 3.2)
- inform and evaluate new initiatives, such as policies to widen access (Section 3.3)
- ensure that careers advice (to students and graduates) is topical, accurate and comprehensive and that such LMI is more widely exploited (Section 3.4)
- monitor the sufficiency of industry contacts — *eg* are there emerging industries with which the institution should strengthen its links? (Section 3.5)
- aid strategic marketing and market research and the promotion and targeting of services (Section 3.6)
- develop the curriculum to better suit the demands and needs of employers (Section 3.7).

These uses of LMI don't always sit neatly with the responsibility of just one person or function, and the role of planners is more direct in some than it is in others. At various points we show some possible implications for planners within HEIs and make recommendations.

3.1 Strategic planning processes and decisions

LMI can contribute much towards an overall analysis of the environment in which an HEI operates. It includes vital contextual and background information which can demonstrate that an institution's strategic plan is grounded within its policy, educational, social, economic and labour market environment.

LMI is also useful to minimise risk. As with any business or investment decision, an understanding of future risk to the market (such as falling customer demand or its sensitivity to price) is valuable, no matter how imperfect that information may be.

Some strategic plans consist of a list of many relatively small decisions, intentions and actions. These items become 'strategic' by virtue of being marshalled in a plan designated as strategic.

There are also the big decisions which are strategic because of their profound importance, regardless of how they may be addressed in a strategic plan. The complete closure or opening of a major area of teaching, or perhaps the decision to open a new campus or withdraw from a certain location, are examples of such big strategic decisions.

There are several ways in which LMI can inform such (big) decisions, but it is important to note that LMI itself is passive and will not necessarily suggest or prompt any action on the part of the institution. A decision to open a new campus or facility, for example, may be reasonably well advanced before a 'viability' test or threshold involving LMI analysis is introduced.

Equally, a result of extensive scanning of the policy environment, and examination of forward-looking LMI sources, may be the decision that nothing needs to change. LMI can usefully inform a decision to do nothing new, and good use of LMI does not necessarily mean a decision to change things.

Policy information spells out the broad picture of whether the sector faces growth or decline, and where funding appears to be creating or changing opportunities. However, more formal LMI (*eg* data on industry needs) can also be of considerable importance in assessing the existence and viability of opportunities.

E

Example of using LMI

One institution examined local economic development plans and strategies to identify an optimal location for a new campus, and did this using both published information and, perhaps more importantly in this context, informal and spoken information.

Planning documents (showing land-zoning, planned transport routes, new business parks, demographic projections and areas of new settlement) were all influential to (and then became influenced by) the decision of the HEI to explore the possibility of a new campus.

However, so important was the softer, discursive sources that the very act of starting to discuss the need and potential for a new campus with the various local agencies (*eg* council, development agency, site developers, businesses, Training and Enterprise Council *etc.*) actually contributed to a new higher education facility becoming a key part of the regeneration strategy adopted by those agencies for the area in question.

In the example above, no single source of data or intelligence suggested a need for a new campus, let alone that it should be in town A or district B. The local culture in various areas is more amenable to economic growth than it is in others, and it is

through multiple but especially high level local contacts that HEIs are able to make the best of such local contours.

The development in the university referred to above, and in others, underlines the critical importance of developing and exploiting networks whose primary aim is to exchange and discuss local and regional economic and social issues.

There are other reasons why spoken LMI can be of particular value, for example:

- There are local issues that may be confidential, volatile, highly political or simply unspoken. These may only be referred to cryptically in, for example, the Regional Economic Strategy of the Regional Development Agency or plans of the local authority.
- There may be significant prospects that could influence the need for changed higher education provision that will not necessarily be predicted in written reports — for example the opening or closure of a major R&D facility owned by a multi-national company.

In another environment, a long-term picture of economic decline in a local area (drawn from LMI reports) could be influential in a decision not to invest in one site, and this might in turn influence the estates strategy and lead to a shift in the geographic focus of the institution. Or, conversely, a long-term economic decline might suggest opportunities of lower land prices, and a strategy of improving the campus, building new halls of residence, and seeking to attract more overseas students.

Of course, for a full viability study on a major investment a more rigorous approach is required. Consultancies and specialist higher education research organisations are able to assist in such work.

3.2 Operational and business planning

There can be pressure on planners to rely on what in LMI terms is called 'supply side' data (*eg* information about the potential and actual learning population accessing the institution) and to neglect 'demand side' messages (*eg* information about employer needs). Thus information about potential student numbers may be analysed and fine tuned, year on year, with no equivalent effort being made to analyse graduate destinations for each course.

This attention (on the supply of students) is understandable within the prevailing funding regime: courses with healthy student demand are likely to be grown, and those with falling student demand may ultimately be closed or changed.

Information about the potential and actual supply of students can be obtained from UCAS management statistics, although many institutions commission additional research to assess

potential demand. The UCAS Institutional Planning Service (IPS) enables HEIs to compare the profile of their applicants with that of similar institutions, although it is limited to full-time undergraduate students.

The relationship between university planners (in central planning teams or roles) and those in subject departments and schools is very important here. Some planners develop a dialogue with those bidding for units to find out more about the labour market factors underlying the existing or bidded-for provision. This can be relatively simple, such as a short discussion, or asking each department to explain very briefly the trends in graduate destinations and how provision was relating to such labour market demand.

It is hard to generalise, but the following is true in at least some institutions:

- Some departmental and school heads feel that they will be 'left alone' by planners as long as student recruitment is good. This does not necessarily mean that provision is not being related to employer needs: it may reflect an appreciation of departmental autonomy and a desire not to have to spend too much time explaining things to a central team. However, unless provision adapts to sometimes rapid changes in labour market demand (as well as fashions in student choice) a healthy recruitment picture can quickly deteriorate. Some planners view part of their role as that of ensuring that complacency does not slip in.
- Planners and academic departments appear to talk more about those courses where recruitment is suffering — for such courses there is more examination of graduate destinations and employer needs than takes place over courses with healthy recruitment. Other factors will also be relevant, of course, such as the long-term educational mission of the institution, or the role of professional institutes and bodies, but labour market analysis can help in a decision to stick with, change or get out of an area with recruitment difficulty.

In places there is evidence that academics have used good quality intelligence from the sector or sectors employing most of the concerned graduates. Such academics will also typically use extensive employer contacts and draw upon reports from trade and industry bodies, professional institutes, the relevant academic or practitioner journals. Former graduates are valued for information, especially those who have been in employment for some years, and students returning from industrial placements are often quizzed about the kinds of skills their host employer required. In this way a highly detailed picture is formed of how industry demand is changing and how this may change future student demand and any necessary curriculum changes.

E

Example: new provision emerging through LMI use

The head of a university engineering department attended the launch of a report on automotive engineering by the local Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). The report highlighted good prospects for the sector locally but also a shortage of suitably qualified graduates able to meet local industry needs.

In discussions at the launch event, it was decided to look at how the HEI could work with employers to introduce a new course to meet their needs. It is worth noting that the individual employers had not articulated or expressed their needs to the HEI before and it was the TEC research project which brought matters to the fore.

A new and highly successful course was developed. The department had another engineering course for which student demand was flagging, and so was able to start up the new course without bidding for additional student numbers.

Occasionally, entirely new and very successful provision can be started up entirely as a result of LMI. There are examples of sectoral reports being used within institutions and developed into new provision. However, planners and academics alike regard such opportunities as few and far between: there are only limited opportunities for change in any one or three year period, and the costs and risks of developing entirely new provision are considerable.

R

Evaluate how LMI has and has not been used in the past

An effective way of assessing LMI needs is to evaluate where and how LMI could have improved the last or current strategic plan. Scrutinise the plan and ask such questions as:

- could more use of LMI have improved the plan, for example by avoiding a mistake or foreseeing a problem?
- did the plan draw on LMI to inform decisions that turned out to be well judged, or one that was a palpable error?
- if demand fell away more than expected for some courses, could market research or LMI have helped predict that? For courses that outperformed expectations, was there some research or LMI that could have anticipated this?

An exercise like this is not an academic one: by examining how LMI has been used in the past (and not used), an HEI can help define its future LMI needs and improve its use of LMI.

3.3 New initiatives

Bids for discretionary or challenge funds (and increasingly for core funds from various bodies) typically require the submission of evidence that there is a need for the service or facility to be funded. Examples are:

- information about deprivation and low participation in some communities, required for some HEFCE and DfEE funds to widen access
- information about the needs of employers, for some DfEE discretionary and challenge funds.

Institutions enjoying close relationships (at various levels) with organisations such as their local councils and TECs are particularly well placed to access the sort of supply side LMI required for such bids. Examples would be the provision of data and possibly unpublished council reports concerning deprivation, or information on participation rates in education.

Local authority planning and education departments are invaluable sources of such information. However, unless working contacts have been built up in advance, such sources might not respond rapidly enough to meet the tight deadlines required for some higher education funding bids.

Challenge and discretionary funds are often quite small in terms of overall funding, and are often designed to 'pump-prime' or encourage changes in practice that the funder seeks. For example, a cost-effective way to encourage independent organisations (like HEIs) to target a particular group is to run a competition that results in each of them taking a close and serious look at how well it currently serves that group.

A danger exists, however, that LMI (and the relevant contacts with local providers of LMI), can become the preserve of 'bid-writers' whose position within the HEI is entirely dependent upon securing income. Not only can this frustrate the intention of the funding body (if it was to bring about change to **mainstream** provision and thinking) but it can also lead to the institution itself failing to capitalise on opportunities.

R **Monitor the LMI capabilities and outputs of bid-dependent units**

Keep a close eye on the outputs, capabilities and contacts of peripheral/discrete fund-raisers within the institution. Where they possess labour market analysis to support new initiatives this can often be drawn upon and 'mainstreamed' for wider use. This can save considerable time and duplication of effort within an institution.

3.4 Careers advice

We hardly need to say that the careers information, advice and guidance relies upon LMI. However, in the context of this Guide, which is aimed primarily at planners, there are some related factors that are relevant.

Some careers services are used by other parts of the institution (including planners) as an internal resource with expertise in LMI. For example, in some institutions the careers service may be asked to contribute towards, or comment upon, the labour market relevance of new course provision. In some other institutions they might simply be drawn upon as an information resource, for example if they are known to have a depository of the relevant labour market publications.

Careers advisers, and managers of careers services, are often at least as expert in LMI as research staff in local TECs, for example. In some topics they will probably be even more knowledgeable, for example when it comes to:

- understanding the graduate labour market, including the changing mix of skills sought by employers
- possessing employer contacts that can be used to seek confidential opinions on course changes or potential new provision
- understanding the longer-term destination patterns of graduates beyond the increasingly misleading six monthly point of the First Destination Survey. *(Note: The FDS is currently under review and such limitations are being looked at.)*

E **Example of poor practice**

Some institutional planners have a 'blind spot' for their own careers service and its resources and expertise. Sometimes the careers service is perceived as serving only students and employers, rather than as a strategic resource for the institution with an ability to provide advice as well as information on labour market trends.

3.5 Industrial liaison and contacts

Contacts between HEIs and industry are many and frequent, and taken together form one of the richest sources of LMI available. Industry liaison groups, individual employers who advise on curriculum changes, and employers who provide placements for students are examples of this. Apart from the careers service (referred to above) most of these contacts will be between individual academics and employers.

Although such contacts often won't be perceived as providing 'LMI', very many of them do just that. Some of the most up-to-date and incisive LMI is not written down, but is discussed between people in informal as well as formal settings. Such information can often be highly relevant and tailored for use within an HEI, perhaps more so than LMI obtained from reports. For example, an employer might complain that recent student placements lacked experience with a particular type of software, or praise their increased knowledge of a second language, or

query their team-working abilities. Such information can all be useful for curriculum development.

However, there are also risks from excessive reliance upon word of mouth, anecdotal or informal information, which are summarised in the box below.

E

Example: risks of over-reliance on verbal and anecdotal LMI

- missing out on intelligence about emerging or rapidly changing sectors if you (or your colleagues) don't have relevant contacts
- contacts may not be representative of their peers or of other companies
- others can be sceptical, sometimes rightly so, concerning the validity of such findings and the extent to which important decisions concerning an institution can be based upon what may in reality only be anecdotes, hunches, gut feelings *etc.*
- missing far wider, longer-term shifts in the structure of industries (eg changes in competition or regulatory policy, ownership, *etc.*) which individual contacts may overlook but which will ultimately have radical impacts on local employers in affected sectors.

It is important, therefore, that verbal and anecdotal LMI is contextualised or verified with written LMI. Published LMI will not only provide written evidence to support what may otherwise be little more than anecdotal information, but it can also help identify imbalance in coverage of industrial trends and structures.

Good quality published LMI (whether national, regional or local in origination) can be a useful source to check if your networks and contacts are covering the areas you ideally wish to cover. For example, if a TEC report highlights long-term growth in logistics, and to high level skill and managerial requirements in that sector, and your institution does not have strong connections with companies in that sector, you could purposefully decide to make contact with such companies.

3.6 Market research and promotion

In the crowded and competitive marketplace for higher education, market research and promotional activity by institutions has become an important use of LMI.

There is growing interest among potential students (and their parents) in assessing the respective career opportunities arising from particular courses of study, and at comparing institutional performance. Of course, for all their alleged crudeness and unfairness, league tables, and those of newspapers, can serve that purpose. One way in which LMI helps those marketing courses is by explaining the employment and longer-term career prospects of those who participate.

Potential students can be informed about the various types of work undertaken by graduates, and by the numbers of graduates flowing each year into the labour market nationally and in their own region.

The extent to which prospective students understand the competition they face in the labour market is a live issue and one where institutions can draw on LMI to educate potential students and their families.

Various types of LMI are useful in such promotional work, but information that goes beyond First Destinations Survey data, and provides longer-term profiles of particular graduates, is particularly popular and useful to help potential students understand how participation in a course may help position them in the labour market.

At a strategic level, institutions can map participation in selected catchment areas and identify places where they may seek to target potential students, via schools or through advertising. For whichever geographic areas they are interested in, they can obtain detailed demographic information and other LMI that will be of use. Customised studies of potential students (and their decision-making thinking and influences) are now commonplace methods of market research.

3.7 Improving relevance of curriculum to employer needs

This is the most significant use of LMI within universities, and ironically the hardest to cover comprehensively in a guide such as this. The extent to which LMI can and should inform curriculum varies according to:

- the vocational specificity of the course
- the employment specificity of the course
- the relevance of available data.

Looking first at vocational specificity, some courses are more closely attuned to a particular profession, occupation or industry. For example, courses in nursing, accountancy or mining will all tend to indicate a career in one of those occupations, for many if not all students. Courses in humanities are not closely associated with any particular subsequent career path, although there are of course traditional routes for many into such areas as education and public service. In that sense, it is natural to expect that LMI will be more useful, and more relevant, for vocationally specific provision.

Funding Councils and professional bodies involved in quality inspection, validation or accreditation take a growing interest in graduate employability, and this suggests a growing need for those developing courses to be able to demonstrate that labour

market demand (as well as student demand) data has influenced provision.

With increased flows of graduates into the labour market, employers are able to become more demanding in terms of what they actually expect of a graduate, and in particular to require some basic employability skills. This is an area where all provision (and not just that which is closely attuned to a particular professional practice or industry) should arguably be informed by LMI. Key skills can be integrated into any curriculum.

The ways in which LMI is adapted for curriculum and pedagogic development is highly varied. Often such actions are subtle or small scale, as the example below illustrates.

E

Example: using LMI to improve the curriculum

A degree level course in publishing changed the way in which project work was organised so that students had to undertake joint, team-based exercises instead of completing exercises by themselves.

The reason for this was that publishing employers complained that student placements and graduates appeared unused to co-operating in small teams, something vital for that industry.

Younger students in particular often found such team-working exercises difficult, as they wanted to prove what they could accomplish by themselves.

Employer contacts reported that industrial placements and graduate recruits from that course became better at fitting into working as part of teams after these changes were made to the course.

A special ability of planners, particularly in institutions with reasonably centralised planning processes, is that of spotting connections and opportunities. Thus a department bidding to open a new sub-degree level course in care management may be unaware that the business school is also considering a new course in quality assurance for public sector managers, including those in care.

If the two departments referred to above happen to be co-located (*eg* on the same floor of the same building) then they might put two and two together themselves, but if not a planning team may also serve that purpose. Regular exposure to LMI means that planners are more likely to spot such connections between ideas, especially as, in this case, both course leaders may well have been using similar external needs data to justify the new course.

R

Take a lead in dissemination of local/regional LMI within the institution

Where local/regional labour market assessments do address the interests of higher education (and currently most do not), it is important to make maximum use of this information.

Internal dissemination of reports is vital and can stimulate a dialogue about labour market responsiveness. For example, an annual local or regional assessment may consistently report upon certain graduate skill deficiencies, or a need for particular key skills. In this instance, HEI planners should have copied the report to departmental heads, highlighting the key generic issues. At the start of the next planning round the planners can then consider asking each department if and how its plans will address those issues. (*See also a later recommendation concerning report summaries.*)

4. Regional and Local LMI: What Should Planners Ask For?

This chapter describes:

- the difference between 'regional' and 'local' (Section 4.1)
- the types of regional and local LMI report that can be obtained (Section 4.1)
- the typical contents of regional and local LMI reports (Section 4.2: main text)
- what HEIs should ask for from those producing regional and local LMI reports (Section 4.2: recommendation boxes).

Much of the recent interest in LMI has been around regional and local information, and this chapter looks at those issues. However, some of what we say here about the techniques, issues and main sources can also be relevant to national LMI.

The aims of this chapter are to help readers become:

- better able to use the information they find in regional and local LMI reports
- more demanding of those who commission and produce regional and local reports, and more effective in negotiating over their LMI needs.

The latter point is currently a live one. The June 1999 White Paper: *Learning to Succeed: a new framework for post-16 learning*, proposes radical changes. A national Learning and Skills Council would be responsible for the funds and work currently of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) and Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs). This Learning and Skills Council would have local arms, which would receive advice on local priorities from, among others, new Lifelong Learning Partnerships. At a national level the Learning and Skills Council would be advised by the rapidly consolidating National Training Organisation (NTO) network.

It is also proposed that a new Small Business Service should replace the existing Business Link network. It is unclear how Training and Enterprise Councils (or Chambers of Commerce, Training and Enterprise in some areas) can contribute towards

these new arrangements, and transitional arrangements were being considered at the time this Guide was written.

We are therefore unclear as to which bodies will be commissioning and producing regional and local labour market reports and data. As TECs cease to exist it seems likely that local labour market work may be taken over by local arms of the proposed Learning and Skills Council.

It is certainly the case that regional and local LMI reports could be more suited to the needs of HEIs, but staff in HEIs will have to make the case for changes in their own local and regional areas.

R

Talk (more) to those who commission and produce local/ regional labour market reports

All HEIs should influence the contents of economic and labour market reports, so that higher education interests and needs are addressed in such reports. Ways of exerting influence include:

- participation in TEC or RDA-led networks that consider economic and labour market issues
- inviting TEC or RDA researchers to participate in higher education networks that consider the economic role of HEIs
- offering to join advisory committees that assist some TECs shape their research programme
- offering to contribute information about your institution and the higher education sector, towards a future report; also, offering to comment on drafts of such reports.

It is worth keeping up to date on which colleagues have relevant contacts (eg with TEC and RDA researchers). There is usually more contact between an HEI and a TEC than may be appreciated, and a quick email survey/call for evidence (eg 'has anyone had contact with the local TEC/RDA *etc.* in the last year?') may reveal some surprises.

Equip those who have the most contact/influence with producers of LMI a copy of this Guide and agree with them your priorities for influence.

4.1 What are regional and local assessments?

Regional and local boundaries

Regional and local assessments are labour market reports whose subject is the operation of a labour market within a region or local area, for example the North East or South West regions, or Stockport or Cambridge as local areas.

Generally the term '**region**' is used within labour market analysis to refer to either a government office region (of which there are nine in England), or the similar standard planning regions — *eg* the East Midlands or North West.

The term **'local'**, in labour market reports, usually refers to an area like that of a county or TEC area.

These terms are not fixed however, and different users can legitimately use 'regional' or 'local' to mean very different territorial areas. Planners in HEIs tend to use the term 'regional' for areas that in labour market analysis are normally called 'local', such as a county, or perhaps a corridor based around a motorway. So when a university plan talks about the institution's 'regional role' this may in fact relate to an area somewhat smaller than a full, formal region.

In practical terms there is often little interest in the formal 'regions' (*eg* Eastern Region or West Midlands or South East). Such regions rarely correspond to the catchment areas and zones of interest (*eg* where a majority of students come from, or where employer needs are most served) for much of the institution. Some formal regions have boundaries that are simply illogical in terms of labour market functioning, for example the South East regional boundary excludes south east counties like Essex, and all of London.

HEIs do, of course, participate with networks and institutions operating at the level of formal 'regions', for example with the regional consultants of HEFCE. It is increasingly the case that LMI is being made available at the level of formal regions, and such regional boundaries are becoming more important to many of the organisations impinging upon university activity.

There is no problem with people adapting terms like 'regional' and 'local' to their own needs as long as everyone is reasonably clear (with others) about the area or areas they are discussing.

Assessments and reviews

Regional assessments and reports are published by consortia of local TECs in most areas and, variously, by Government Regional Offices. It is likely that new Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) will produce similar regional documents. Initially, however, RDAs have only needed to publish Regional Economic Strategies and skills strategies, which are more about policy prescription than a description of regional economies and labour markets. Local level LMI reports are produced by individual TECs in all areas, and often by local authority economic development units or planning departments.

The term **assessment** has a distinct meaning, and an important one. A labour market assessment marshals a wide range of information cognate to labour market operation, including supply side and demand side factors.

As well as presenting the results of research findings, both descriptive and analytical, such reports seek to assess the major issues and trends affecting the operation of the labour market.

As such, a reader can use a high quality labour market assessment in two ways:

- first, as a reference or source material from which to gain facts, figures and views on the labour market
- secondly, as a source of views on which areas of labour market functioning may benefit from support — *eg* the provision of more or different training, education, jobs generation, business support, lifelong learning, *etc*.

That latter includes the all-important task of identifying areas where new or changed higher education provision could be viable. However, while an assessment should help identify issues and priorities, most assessments will not be prescriptive about intervention or spell out where new or changed courses are necessary. This is a source of frustration among some readers of labour market reports, who complain that the LMI generates too many 'so what?' questions.

For example, a regional labour market assessment might report that unemployment has doubled and that the unemployment rate is twice the national average. It is unlikely, however, that an assessment will then take the step of suggesting particular solutions to that unemployment problem. It is for those who read and use the report, be these policy makers or academics, planners or employers, to interpret the information and decide what (if any) action they wish to take.

The way in which regional and local market assessments are produced means that it is very unlikely that they will be able to provide a commentary on the findings that is specifically geared to readers in higher education. However, that does not mean that individual HEIs, or perhaps a group of them, cannot interpret a regional or local assessment for its implications for the sector or institution.

In a few local areas the local assessments of TECs are in reality little more than **reviews** — they review the evidence, but do not seek to weight the various types of evidence and assemble it analytically. A labour market or skills review is probably not as useful as a good quality assessment (which should have all the qualities of the review plus the additional assessment). However, a good quality review can constitute a very useful reference source.

4.2 Structure and contents of regional/local assessments

Although the geographic area covered by a regional assessment is bigger than that covered by a local assessment, such documents are generally very similar in terms of structure and contents. As local assessments are more common, we refer to these most in the following section, but most of what we say could also apply to regional reports.

Each local assessment is different, and while some are innovative in terms of structure and content, there are some conventions that determine the broad structure of most of them, and a limited number of choices of source materials that can be drawn upon.

Preliminary text

Introductions

The preface, foreword, introduction and summary sections of such reports are of variable use in informing readers about the purpose and coverage of the document.

R

Ensure that higher education is acknowledged

Regional and local assessments usually list organisations who the authors hope the report will influence, or who are important to the economy and labour market. If HEIs are omitted from such lists, the authors should be asked if that could be rectified in future editions. A positive approach is to offer information about your institution and the higher education sector so that this could be drawn on in a future report.

Summaries

Our research has shown that a typical HEI would like labour market assessments to have relatively long summaries rather than the short executive-style summaries found in some reports. Summaries should be somewhere around six to eight sides, of a length that can be read in about twenty minutes. They should contain key facts and figures and bullet-style summaries of the main issues affecting the local labour market.

The reason for this preference is that HEI planners would like quite large numbers of colleagues to read LMI, but they know that very few will read a full report, and that a two side summary will simply skate over the issues.

R

Ask for detailed summary information

Those providing regional and local labour market and economic assessments should be asked to include a detailed summary of somewhere around six to eight sides. Research shows that this will help ensure maximum take-up and use of LMI within HEIs, and that shorter 'executive summaries' are of limited use.

How local is local?

A good local assessment will outline one of its purposes as being that of describing the uniqueness of the local economy and providing an evidence base to help local agencies determine local

priorities. Weaker assessments tend to include introductions that repeat national policies (*eg* of DfEE), for example by reference to concepts like national competitiveness, or the need to achieve the government-sponsored national learning targets.

A good regional or local assessment will explain repeatedly how a local fact or issue differs from the national picture. Local policy makers only have limited discretionary funds and these tend to be earmarked to tackle specifically local issues. A common failure of local analysis is that it leads to misconceptions about what is unique. For example, a common misconception among local policy makers is that their area has an unusually high dependence upon small businesses, even when the area in question may actually have a smaller proportion of employment generated by such small companies than the national average.

One of the causes of such misconceptions are poor quality local assessments that fail to show how the local area differs from the national picture, and this can result in scarce discretionary resources being misdirected on the wrong policies.

Our research has shown that HEIs have a particular need for compatible LMI at national, regional and local levels, because of the various and often overlapping geographic roles and markets they serve.

R

Request local/national comparisons

A local/regional assessment that does not compare local statistics with the regional and national level is almost certainly incomplete. While most TEC local reports don't have this weakness, a few do.

Remind those producing such reports that your interests cover all geographic levels – local, regional, national and often international – and that you need direct comparison of data for different geographic areas wherever possible.

Context

These sections are perhaps more varied than any other. Generally, their purpose is to explain the welter of external forces and pressures that influence the regional or local area, and they do these by summarising information on such issues as:

- global economic and political pressures and events
- industrial restructuring
- mergers between multinational companies
- technological advances, mostly but not solely connected to IT
- international trade relations
- domestic political and macro-economic trends and events.

At their worst such material comprises just a few paragraphs repeating stock phrases about 'restructuring' and a review of a few national economic indicators without any explanation as to what they mean or why they are relevant. At best these synopses make local LMI reports 'respectable': an otherwise somewhat dry and even parochial report is brought to life and readers can see the links between global change and the operation of their local labour market. While there is little direct use that can be made of such material, it can persuade an academic to take the report more seriously and it can also dispel concerns about parochialism.

Also, a good local or regional report will focus most strongly on issues that will have the most impact on the local area. For example, in an area with say two major pharmaceuticals plants or insurance head offices, the international trend towards merger will be highlighted and explored, as it is highly likely to present a significant risk to the local economy.

Some local reports contain additional information in the form of typologies, which describe the 'drivers' of change in the local economy and labour market. The typologies typically refer to such factors as 'the virtual firm', 'feminisation of work' *etc.* and explore the possible implications for the labour market of the future.

R

Gather some good examples to share with your LMI provider

A few TECs and other producers of local labour market reports fail to include a useful contextual section at the beginning of reports. It may be worth showing them a report from elsewhere, explaining why such an approach would be useful to you, and asking if they might be interested in producing something like that in the future.

Local reports produced by consultancies such as the Policy Research Institute of Leeds Metropolitan University or Prism Research, will usually be good examples to show what can be done in this area; these tend to have thoughtful contextual and analytical sections. However, there are many other consultancies and report writers who also produce good examples.

Overview of local or regional economy

This is where our earlier discussion of 'assessment' becomes relevant. Some assessments provide an overview of the major characteristics and features of the local or regional economy, with a pen portrait of what distinguishes it from other areas. The better assessments will also, possibly in annexes, break such pen-portraits down to smaller local areas, *eg* particular towns. Major economic development, regeneration and planning issues will typically be highlighted in such sections.

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the local economy is also typically included within such sections, and these can be of use to local policy makers in conceptualising and prioritising issues.

A minority of SWOT analyses of local areas may include under 'Strengths' such features as the presence of a university with close business links, or, under 'Opportunities', discussion about bringing a new campus to a town or county previously lacking a significant HE presence. The better reports also provide profiles of local areas within the region, recognising that within a standard region or county there is still a lot of labour market and economic variation.

Such overview sections can be useful reference materials for HEIs involved in preparing funding or other bids that require a basic description of the local or regional area. This is especially the case where the role of higher education within the economy has been analysed. For example, if one local weakness is identified as being 'poor progression into degree level study', then such a reference could be used to support a bid to fund better FE-HE links or progression routes. Where a local report fails to pay due attention to the role of higher education, this is an opportunity for HEI planners or marketing staff to ensure that the local producers of LMI have good quality information about the role and significance of the sector.

R

Seek in-house advice

Ask an in-house expert to critique local/regional labour market reports for their quality, relevance and possible implications for the institution. Planners, geographers or economists may be particularly useful in this role.

Demand side factors

The structure of regional and local reports is too varied for us to be prescriptive about this. Demand side and supply side factors are almost always separated within discrete chapters. Indeed, one weakness of regional and local reports can be their very failure to bring information about supply and demand together. Within a demand side section there may be two or even three chapters with various headings, rather than just one: there is no single 'right' way of structuring such information.

What the authors of assessments are usually trying to do in such a section is to describe the structure of economic activity and employment within the local area or region, and to analyse how this is changing.

Business trends and issues

These tend to be areas of weakness in regional and local labour market reports, and often comprise reporting of the local chamber of commerce business confidence survey results. A limitation is that they are far too immediate (and, in themselves, transient) to be of significant use for planning purposes. Some

assessments also include a few statistics on local GDP or competitiveness, although often without the necessary interpretation to help a reader understand what the figures mean.

Unfortunately, only a minority of regional and local assessments review the extensive literature on changing business structures, ownership and organisation.

There is often rather little serious analysis of the real business issues, *eg* long-term investment in new plant and equipment, market research and new product development, sales and marketing, exporting, and the human resources and skills issues that flow from the former.

It is unlikely that the sort of business information included in many regional and local assessments will be of much use to HEIs, who may in any event have access to superior intelligence from within their own business schools or economics departments.

R

Identify the type of economic and business trend information you need

A good quality local or regional assessment will show how the changing business environment, business structures/organisation and technology are changing the demand for employment and skills. If reports for your area lack this, then they may be incomplete as assessments of labour market and skills issues. You should identify what information would be most useful and talk with the provider about ways of enhancing future editions.

As recommended earlier, it may help if you gather examples of reports from other areas that cover such issues successfully.

Employment levels

In the main, demand side information is expressed in terms of the number of jobs. These figures are broken down according to industry and occupation, and whether work is full- or part-time.

As well as providing reasonably up-to-date snapshots, regional and local assessments also describe trends through analysis of changes going back up to ten years and also by the use of projections that can look up to ten years into the future. For example, the better assessments will examine trends towards more or less part-time, full-time or self-employed work, and show which industries and occupations are most and least affected.

There are various sources of such data, including regular surveys, which both provide current snapshots and also build into trend data over time. What used to be the Census of Employment and is now the Annual Employer Survey (AES), is the main national source of data on employment numbers. This is a large national survey, undertaken annually, from which detailed data is

available at local authority level. The basis upon which the survey is undertaken is that of workplaces, *ie* where people work.

Another survey — the Labour Force Survey (LFS) — provides data on employment according to where people live, as it surveys people in their households, not workplaces. In areas with large outflows (for example dormitory or commuter suburbs) or large inflows (*eg* major city and town centres) it makes a big difference whether data is analysed according to where people work, or where workers live. Neither approach is right or wrong, and the selection of source depends upon the intended use of the analysis.

E

Examples of industrial and occupational classifications

Data is classified according to the national Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) and Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) systems.

These are layered classification systems, and at local level only the broadest or more aggregated levels (which have the least direct relationship to particular workplaces or working situations) are generally regarded as reliable.

For example, at very local levels data can be reliable on the number of people working in the banking and financial services sector overall, but it may not be reliable for parts of the sector such as insurance or broking. Equally, data may be reliable at local level concerning the employment of all professionals, but it may not be reliable or even available at local level when that is broken into more detailed groups, eg for dentists or airline pilots or teachers.

One difficulty with the classifications is that they take time to adapt to changing circumstances — an example was the explosion of information technology, with entirely new industries and occupations brought in its wake, aside from the impact on every industry and occupation that was affected. Good quality labour market analyses will never depend entirely upon employment statistics (categorised by industries and occupations) because the most significant change is often that which is masked by existing classifications.

The SOC system is currently being reviewed and so it is likely that a revised system will be introduced embracing new occupations such as IT, media *etc*. However, there is always a downside from such changes, and in this case it will mean that historical trend analysis for some occupations will be disrupted — these problems are referred to as 'discontinuities' and may make it harder to predict the rate of change, at least for a few years.

Employment projections

While the above sources build up a historic picture of change, we are reliant upon large and complex models of the labour market

to quantify likely change in the future. Econometric forecasts of the labour market can go beyond simple totals within particular industries and occupations, and categories of full- or part-time work. It is also possible to project forward trends in vacancies, participation rates and commuting patterns.

As with all economic and social science, there are methodological issues that limit the accuracy of such projections, not least the chronic uncertainty about how the labour market will adapt with each economic cycle.

At local level such models can do little more than produce projections for the broad occupational and industrial groups. These will show the direction and scale of change in employment that might be expected for manufacturing, or professional employment, for example. The reason why further detail is not possible is that, in many local areas, a particular industry may be dominated by just a handful of employers. It would only take one company to close, or for there to be a major inward investment, to completely throw out any projections based upon previous performance.

These problems are not simply those of accuracy: a detailed local model implies a certainty that is positively misleading, and can lead to a lack of preparedness for some of the changes the local economy will actually have to confront. Local economies do not change in the evolutionary, steady way that econometric projections imply — they are spasmodic and in many senses far harder to accurately predict change for than is the case with the national labour market.

Regional and local assessments often place excessive reliance on local forecasting models, ignoring national sources that forecast employment and other changes. For many industries and occupations the only reliable projections are at national level, because numbers are often too small at local (*eg* TEC) level.

However, national projections data are often excluded from local/regional reports because of the mindset that a local/regional assessment should focus just on the local/regional level. There is no reason why this should be so, however. National projections can be interpreted in a local/regional report using a mix of quantitative and qualitative techniques, so that the implications for the local economy can be analysed.

As mentioned earlier, there are not many direct 'fits' between even quite detailed SIC (industry) and SOC (occupational) groups and particular types of higher education courses. However, it is necessary to accept the limitations of projections and accept that detailed local data may not be reliable. It can be useful to have broad trends confirmed, and also to have a reliable source of snapshot data on employment, which the Annual Employer Survey and Labour Force Surveys both provide.

R

Ask for more and better survey trend data

Those producing local and regional LMI reports need to be made aware that HEIs are looking for reliable evidence of long-term trends, as it may take up to five years for changes in course provision to have an impact on the labour market.

Annual local/regional assessments often draw heavily on surveys of employers and households. However, frequent technical changes with aspects such as the sample, coding and question wording can make it impossible to make valid year-on-year comparisons of data. Some regular TEC surveys have been badly damaged by such discontinuities.

When talking to those who commission and produce annual assessments, stress how important it is for you to have consistent time-trend data.

Sectoral profiles

Regional and local labour market or economic assessments will generally provide some commentary or analysis of what is happening in particular sectors of the economy.

These vary enormously in their quality and depth, from short superficial paragraphs of just twenty or so words per sector, through to well-researched and insightful profiles of sectors of up to around 500 words per sector. Also, because such commentaries can be written without requiring quotation of statistics, it is possible to provide information on more sectors than can be done in a statistical table. For example, one local report provides information on no fewer than twenty eight subsectors.

The better assessments will include education as a sector in its own right, for example by examining the contribution of the higher education sector in terms of direct employment and spin-off activities with local business.

R

Use sectoral profiles to guide planning discussions with departments

Sectoral profiles found in local/regional assessments rarely provide the detail required for curriculum development. Lecturing staff need far more detailed knowledge of the relevant sectors, and will often have their own national sources of this.

However, the broad information found in local/regional assessments can provide a planner with a useful background about issues and trends in a sector. This background can be used in discussion with an academic who seeks to change a particular course.

When reading such sections of local/regional assessments, a planner should be framing questions to ask a particular school concerning their own provision, eg 'how are we responding to the increasing

demand for scientific professionals among the growing pharmaceutical sector of our region?'.

A standard 'checklist' of questions can be developed to structure such discussions with all departments.

It is very important to let those who produce local/regional reports know if their material has been useful in curriculum development and planning – encouragement and positive feedback could result in an even more useful report next year.

Skills and qualification issues

We said earlier in this Guide that transactions for labour are also transactions for skills. However, partly because of the complexities of presenting a labour market analysis, skills data and issues often become detached into separate chapters and the connections become lost.

There are regular sources of data on recruitment difficulties, most notably a major national survey of employers undertaken on behalf of DfEE each year — the **Skill Needs in Britain Survey**. A strength of this survey is that many of its questions are repeated year on year, meaning the comparisons and trends can be drawn. Although the sample is not big enough to permit local report (*eg* at local authority district or TEC level), much of the data is reported at the level of regions (*eg* the North West or South East). The National Skills Task Force will be publishing new data on skills issues during the year 2000.

There are also individual skills surveys by sectoral bodies such as NTOs (National Training Organisations). NTOs sometimes call their research into skills 'Skills Foresight', and these are usually detailed and very current analyses of changing labour market and skills trends affecting their sector. At a local level some TECs also commission and publish sectoral research. In their annual labour market and economic assessments TECs make much use of their household and employer surveys, and in some regions they share data with neighbouring TECs meaning an even bigger and more reliable picture can be drawn.

It is notoriously difficult to use surveys as a means of eliciting future skills needs of employers. Unfortunately, local reports tend to rely excessively on single surveys, and to ignore longer-term trends or wider contextual literature about changing employer skills needs. One result is a tendency towards simplification and blandness. Needs for generic or key skills are easily picked up in such surveys, but more complex or vocationally specific skills needs can elude the survey.

Qualification attainment data on the local population is typically quite plentiful in TEC area local reports, and at a regional level is

also available from HESA. As with participation data, HESA statistics will often produce a slightly different picture than, for example, the Labour Force Survey. Small discrepancies are inevitable given the methodological differences between each survey or counting method, and do not necessarily indicate that one source is right and another wrong.

R

Encourage national questions to be asked locally

The skills data typically used in regional and local reports tends to be survey based, and therefore not very forward looking.

HEIs should encourage TECs or others commissioning local or regional research to attempt to replicate (and boost) national survey research, for example by asking some identical questions to the Skills in Britain national survey. That way it is easier to obtain local/national comparisons.

Supply side factors

Regional and local labour market assessments draw heavily on two sources of data to describe the overall size of the population and of trends in population change over time, including forecasts of population change for different age groups and geographic areas. This is basic intelligence underlying forecasting work for the potential and future supply of students to HEIs.

The main source of data to describe the population is the **Census of Population**, undertaken once a decade and next due in 2001. One of the most useful sources from which to obtain local data, and also analysis of Census of Population data, is the planning departments of local authorities. Planning departments usually publish demographic forecasts for their local area and sometimes supplementary analyses of these data. It is possible to assess with some precision the size of various age cohorts at periods in the future, which is of significant use to planners.

In addition to the overall demographic statistics, the Census of Population provides a vast range of data on labour market issues, including qualification levels, types of work undertaken and travel-to-work patterns. With the serious drawback that the data from the 1991 Census is now quite old, it is a useful source for which to look at broad socio-economic trends and to compare one area to another. The Census has no rival for its ability to provide detailed data for very local levels: for much data this can be done down to the level of wards and their constituent Enumeration Districts.

Another highly valuable source of material on supply side factors is the **Labour Force Survey**. This is a national survey but in recent years it has become increasingly powerful for comparing local with regional and national areas. As its name implies, it is

based upon a survey rather than a census, and that means that at local levels there may be insufficient responses to provide detailed answers to some questions. However, at TEC level there is a wealth of information available on the local population, labour market participation and supply side factors including unemployment and training received.

The Labour Force Survey is the main instrument for assessing the scale and nature of economic participation, and provides information on the proportion of the population (of various age groups, and in different areas) who participate in higher education.

A third national source, and one of increasing interest to many, is the DETR's **Index of Deprivation.** This Index scores local areas against a battery of measures, to assess the extent and intensity of relative deprivation. It has tended to be underused in TEC reports, but that may change as social inclusion issues rise up the agenda and funding bodies like HEFCE tweak funding towards people from deprived areas. The data can be downloaded from the DETR's website without charge, and it is one of the very few datasets referred to in this Guide where we would recommend that HEI planners familiarise themselves with this source.

At a local level, much useful data is available from local authority education departments and from individual schools and FE colleges.

Which source is best?

The Census of Population is comprehensive, but currently seriously out of date. HEI planners should be very cautious when using such data for areas experiencing rapid change. For example, parts of the Thames Valley and East Anglia have grown very rapidly, while cities like Manchester and Liverpool have lost a sizeable amount of their populations.

The Labour Force Survey is very timely, but quite a complex dataset to use without guidance, and HEIs are therefore likely to be looking to TECs and similar bodies to undertake some analysis.

R

Make sure you have enough supply side data

There is a general need for more supply side data than is usually provided in most regional and local assessments. Such data can inform a range of decisions, including the location of facilities and policies to widen access.

HEIs should express to providers of local/regional LMI their need for more data and analysis, especially that relating to age cohort size, educational participation, and deprivation.

51

4.3 Missing analysis

There are a considerable amount of data that can help us understand the regional and local role of HEIs, and their contribution to economic development. For example, HESA data can be used to study where people in particular counties or regions study, and whether regions are tending to 'export' or 'import' students. This data is almost always missing from regional and local reports, and this is a serious shortcoming as regards making such reports relevant to the higher education sector.

A team from the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURDS) at Newcastle University has championed regional analysis of higher education data, most notably in their 1998 report for the DfEE (entitled *Universities and Economic Development*). In that report they examined how participation in different types of institution (old and new) affects later employment.

As part of the development project leading up to this Guide, IES circulated a regional labour market report to HEIs in the South East region. Included in that report were examples of how higher education sector data can be used at a regional level. Some titles from that report are reproduced as Annex C, to illustrate the types of data that are available at regional levels.

R

Ensure that those producing local/regional assessments understand the role of higher education

TEC local/regional assessments provide details of basic and intermediate vocational qualification and skills issues. However, they tend to neglect discussion of higher vocational and graduate level qualifications and skills, and of the graduate labour market. This bias reflects the traditional focus of TEC spending and interest in the area of vocational education and training.

HEIs should make sure that those producing local and regional LMI reports are aware of their needs. Planners should, for example, recommend to such providers of LMI that they draw on data from HESA and other higher education sector sources. In this way higher and graduate level skills and labour market issues can be properly addressed.

In Annex C we show some illustrative tables drawn from a report that integrated issues of graduate education and labour market into a wider assessment of a regional labour market. These tables may be useful prompts for a discussion with your local/regional provider of LMI reports.

4.4 Conclusions

There is usually a range of other issues covered within regional and local assessments as well as those raised above. For example,

Careers Service data on the first destinations of school leavers are often used, and data is typically provided on such issues as the number of companies securing Investors in People status, and local progress towards national education and training and lifelong learning targets. We have, however, focused on the common core that will be found in virtually all such reports.

It is very hard for those writing local and regional reports to summarise the huge quantities of information often required by readers, without producing reports that are too long for anyone to read. Also, it takes considerable professional skill to weave together information and data from the various geographic areas involved — national, sometimes international, regional and local, and from quantitative and qualitative sources. The resources devoted to writing such reports are quite tight given the work involved, and so it is hardly surprising that not all user needs are met perfectly.

However, there has been a general trend towards marginalising higher education in local labour market assessments. Partly this is because such reports have tended to be funded by TECs, and their primary interests are not in higher education or graduate or professional labour markets. Such issues as graduate labour markets, the use of graduates within the local economy, or the linkages between company R&D and universities, are generally only referred to in the better market assessments, and even then it is generally just an acknowledgement rather than a serious exploration. Basic sources, such as AGR reports and UCAS statistics, or the HESA FDS results, are routinely omitted from regional and local reports.

The higher education sector has not always helped this situation by, for example, HESA needing to charge users for their data. Such costs can deter those writing regional and local reports from using higher education sector data. Individual HEIs sometimes don't seem to have basic information about their local economic role, *eg* in terms of numbers employed and the nature of their contacts with the local economy.

R

Forge closer links with LMI producers in local agencies

This final recommendation re-iterates a message we have already made. HEI planners should get as close as possible to the TEC research functions, and those of successor bodies and the RDAs. HEIs will only obtain the local and regional LMI they need by working collaboratively with other agencies to make their needs and interests understood.

We believe that some investment in time and patience may lead to an improvement in the quality and relevance of local and regional LMI within a few years.

5. Essential LMI Sources

In this chapter we:

- outline what types and sources of LMI are generally available at national level (Section 5.1) and at regional and local levels (Section 5.2)
- suggest sources that we think are essential for HEI planners, and other contextual information that should be reviewed from time to time (also Sections 5.1 and 5.2).

We are referring to published material, although it should be remembered that for every published source there will be useful informal or unwritten intelligence that will also be relevant. We are including websites under publications, where they are used to regularly publish research and LMI-type information.[1]

E

Examples: web versus paper-based sources

In this chapter we provide examples of written and web-based LMI data. However, even during the time this Guide was being drafted there were considerable changes taking place. Far more data and analysis is now being placed on websites and can be downloaded free of charge. For example, all the higher education sector bodies whose data we refer to in this chapter are increasingly placing data on their websites.

As this chapter may date more rapidly than the remainder of the Guide, we would recommend that users always visit an organisation's website first to check if the data we refer to is available there rather than assume it is only available in a hard copy report.

5.1 LMI produced at national level

Academics will receive the bulk of national level LMI going into each HEI. Professional institutes, National Training Organisations, industry bodies and professional and trade journals will all

[1] For those who would like a basic explanation of how to undertake labour market analysis themselves, there is an excellent DfEE *'LMI matters'* package that can be accessed free of charge at www.ctad.co.uk/lmimatters

provide detailed and current market intelligence on particular industries, sectors or professions.

There is far more LMI and labour market analysis available at national level than at regional or local level. The reasons for this are fairly obvious:

- the research and analysis involved is very expensive
- many issues and trends are broadly similar in most or even all parts of the country, and
- those with the largest research commissioning budgets generally have national remits.

Thus, on the demand side, the DTI commissions and publishes research on sectors and issues of primarily national interest, as do the National Training Organisations, industry lead bodies and trade associations. DfEE has a national remit and most of its research is national in focus, as is that of higher education organisations such as CIHE, AGR, HEFCE and CVCP (please refer to the glossary of acronyms towards the end of this Guide).

Trends in labour market issues defined by personal characteristics (such as age, sex, disability, ethnicity) or qualification level (*eg* for graduates, or unqualified people) are all researched at national level. A major reason why government departments fund research is to inform the development and monitoring or their own national policy. The statutory and voluntary sector organisations that can afford to commission primary research, or contribute to such projects, cannot afford to do this on anything other than a national level. Thus what might broadly be termed 'equalities' research is predominately national in orientation.

The results of large national surveys can often be disaggregated to regional and local levels, and where they can they are included within regional and local reports (discussed below).

It is important to remember that an understanding of a regional or local labour market also requires a detailed understanding of national issues: part of the explanation of a local labour market is its uniqueness, which can only be gauged by comparison with other areas. A common weakness in local reports HEIs obtain from organisations like TECs is where they fail to compare local findings to those for the country as a whole.

5.1.1 Nationally produced LMI: essential

The DfEE's Skills & Enterprise Network

For anyone interested in labour market issues this is absolutely essential and it has no peer. Its publications are all designed for reading and reference by non-specialists assumed to have busy

jobs, and they build up over time into a powerful, indexed resource of labour market intelligence. If you are not on the Skills & Enterprise Network mailing list, and would like to receive its free reports, the number is 0845 602 2260.

The Skills & Enterprise Network produces an **Annual Labour Market and Skills Assessment** which is a national equivalent of the local area assessments we discuss in more detail in this Guide. It is authoritative and as well as supplying the sort of facts and figures that can be referred to regularly, it provides a good commentary on the main trends affecting the labour markets of the UK. As with all Skills & Enterprise Network publications there is no charge made.

There are other regular briefings from the Skills & Enterprise Network and we would place each of these on the 'essential list' for those in HEIs who seek to obtain the best possible LMI. They are:

Skills & Enterprise Network **Briefing**. This publication carries the byline: 'what recent labour market, research and evaluation developments mean for you'. To illustrate, the most recent edition (August 1999) leads with a five-side summary of the government white paper on post-16 learning, and continues with shorter pieces on the government's School Sixth Form Funding consultation exercise and the consultation exercise on the Small Business Service. It is an excellent source for summarised briefings on policy-related labour market material.

Skills & Enterprise Network **Executive.** This is a quarterly publication with the byline: 'keeps decision makers in touch with key labour market, research and evaluation developments'. It contains quite lengthy reviews/summaries of recently completed research projects, not just from DfEE but also those published by other organisations. For example, the more recent (August 1999) edition has small pieces (of about 750 words each) on quality standards in work-based training, key skills in further education, social exclusion among young people, the links between homelessness and unemployment, student choice in HE, graduate experience in the labour market, the links between graduate prospects and class and age, graduate self-employment, employer recruitment difficulties and national traineeships.

Skills & Enterprise Network **Labour Market Quarterly Report**. This is, in our view, a more accessible window to official labour market statistics than the ONS Labour Market Trends publication, which we describe later under the 'useful but not essential reading' heading. This report contains up-to-date summaries of labour market, training, education and skill statistics, including findings from some datasets that are rarely if ever exploited in regional or local labour market assessments. As well as regular features (*eg* on unemployment) there are special features. The most recent edition (August 1999) has a special

feature on the first National Adult Learning Survey, and contains information that will be of direct relevance to those in HEIs interested in widening access and lifelong learning.

Skills & Enterprise Network **Update** describes itself as a quarterly digest of recent labour market research and evaluation reports and developments. Update is a comprehensive listing of LMI-type reports published in the last quarter, not just by government departments but a wide range of publishers. It also contains information about ongoing projects, upcoming conferences and seminars. Among the headings used to classify research publications are education, training, young people, qualifications, skills, labour market, management and supervision, small firms and enterprise, equal opportunities, and 'general'. Research relevant to higher education may exist under any of these headings, although research directly relevant to the sector and produced by sector-related bodies like CVCP will tend to be listed in the education section. This can be scanned quickly and is an invaluable aid to identifying current or newly published research in the field of education and training.

Other essential sources

The **DTI's Foresight** programme has a website (www.dti.gov.uk) containing information about new and emerging industries, and research surrounding these sectors. This is the kind of cutting-edge and forward-looking labour market research that should be monitored to assess what the industrial contours of the country may look like in ten years time.

The **Financial Times FT.com:** website (currently free) possesses a lot of sectoral and business intelligence that can be accessed free through that. It provides a more current perspective than the forward-looking DTI Foresight database. It is fast loading and an easy site to explore.

The **DETR's** website (www.detr.gov.uk) contains the extremely useful (and free) **Index of Deprivation** database, and anyone who may need to produce statistics or study patterns of relative deprivation in their local area should try this source directly before trying elsewhere (*eg* at the planning department of the local authority or TEC). The government's **Social Exclusion Unit** also produces reports on supply side issues, particularly deprivation, that can be of use to those involved in widening access policy and practice.

HEFCE, CVCP, FEFC circulars, briefings and reports. We include FEFC because the FE sector in particular has developed policies and techniques for researching and addressing very local needs, and some of those methods will be of direct use to those in higher education who are developing sub-degree level provision or who wish to research the need for widening access.

Occasional and regular reports from organisations like the Council for Industry and Higher Education (**CIHE**) and the Association of Graduate Recruiters (**AGR**) are included within our 'essential' list.

Reports from organisations that publish regularly in this area, like NIACE, IER, or the **IES Annual Graduate Review**, should also be considered. However, as many of these reports carry a charge it can be worth reviewing a free summary first, and reading reviews or features in publications like those of the Skills & Enterprise Network publications or the Times Higher Ed.

The **First Destinations Survey** (published by **HESA** as *First Destinations of Students Leaving Higher Education Institutions — Reference Volume*) is an essential reference source. This report is probably the single most useful for studying graduate destinations and the immediate interface between higher education and the labour market. It provides details of the labour market status of students by their subject and level of study, and sex, as of December 31 of the year in which they graduated. There is also data for the sector and occupation of those graduates entering employment in the UK. The main drawback of this source is the growing recognition that it now takes graduates one or two years to establish a stable foothold in the labour market, and so the labour market messages from six months after graduation are of diminishing predictive capacity concerning longer term career destinations. (Available from HESA, currently priced at £30.00; tel. 01242 255577.)

UCAS Statistical Tables Report provides a wealth of data on student applications for HND as well as first degree courses. Although somewhat less detailed than the data that can be obtained from HESA, it tends to be rather more current, which probably gives it an edge for many users. Importantly, the UCAS data provides data on parental social class, which can be useful in work to analyse or plan widening participation. Current cost is £10 from UCAS (tel. 01242 222444) but much data can be obtained without charge from the UCAS website: www.ucas.ac.uk/higher/stats/table. For those institutions that are members of UCAS there are also UCAS **Management Statistics**, providing immense amounts of detail on all those who applied to the institution. This is the single best source for comparing how your institution is doing in terms of the parental social class of applicants and acceptances to each subject, compared with national figures.

5.1.2 Other nationally produced LMI

The **Office for National Statistics (ONS)** publishes the official national gazette of labour market information each month, called **Labour Market Trends**. This contains a wealth of data from official surveys and datasets, together with statistical supplements, papers that analyse labour market issues, and

much technical information concerning LMI and the use of official labour market statistics. As general reading it is far too detailed and technical for most people, and we regard it as primarily a resource for those who regularly need to undertake quite detailed and technical labour market analysis.

DfEE Research Publications. DfEE has a strong record of publishing its research, and a lot of it is available at minimum cost. These reports include background research and reviews into issues of interest to government, and evaluations of government funded labour market initiatives. We do not recommend that these be routinely obtained or reviewed by HEIs for planning purposes. If they are relevant they will in any event be referred to in one of the more synoptic labour market reviews of assessments. However, free summaries of reports are available and if they appear to be in a relevant topic they can be worth obtaining. (These free summaries can be obtained from DfEE, tel. 0845 602 2260.)

Newspapers such as the **Times Higher Education Supplement**, and the **Guardian**'s Education Supplement on Tuesday, are useful sources for policy-type intelligence but are not sources of mainstream LMI for higher education, so in our listing they are not essential.

DfEE Press Releases. These are available in paper form or through the DfEE website. The problem is that there are now so many of them, covering matters great and small, that it's probably best to see which are picked up in the Times Higher or Guardian rather than wade through them each week.

HESA Research Datapacks. HESA have produced a number of Research Datapacks which contain data on single issues, such as ethnicity, entry qualifications in HE, course results, first destinations and disability. They provide extremely detailed data (in the form of spreadsheets), but some of the older packs may now be becoming a little dated. Currently each pack costs £120.00, from HESA (tel. 01242 255577). Readers of this Guide will very probably be aware that HESA also produces **Higher Education Management Statistics — Institution Level**, at £60.00 each, and that it can handle special data queries for a minimum charge of between £75.00 and £100.00 plus VAT. email: Data.Provision@hesa.ac.uk.

The **Institutional Planning Service (IPS)** from **UCAS** is designed to help marketing and planning staff in UCAS member institutions with recruitment strategies. There are three kinds of data that can be obtained through IPS: national statistics, institutional data compared with aggregate data for at least six other institutions, and customised data that is tailored to particular user needs. Prices depend upon what is required, and can be obtained along with background information about IPS from UCAS, tel. 01242 544907, email: ips@ucas.ac.uk.

The **Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR)** publishes the twice yearly **Survey of Graduate Recruiters.** It includes details of salaries, numbers of vacancies and areas of shortfall between graduate supply and demand. The reports are free to AGR members only and details are available from the AGR on 01926 623236. **Incomes Data Services (IDS)** produce an annual report entitled **Pay and Progression for Graduates**, with details of graduate salaries — cost details are available from IDS, tel. 0171 324 2599. Another useful source is the **Careers Service Unit's** quarterly publication **Graduate Market Trends**, available free of charge from CSU, tel. 0161 277 5200, or through the CSU website: www.prospects.csu.ac.uk

Individual **National Training Organisations** are becoming more frequent publishers of sectoral intelligence, although currently not all NTOs are regularly publishing such material.

5.2 Regional and local labour market research

Currently, the main producers of local research are TECs, and the main producers of regional research are consortia including TECs, Government Regional Offices and now Regional Development Agencies.

As outlined earlier, many TECs are likely to have closed or to have significantly changed their form by April 2001. As we write this Guide we do not know what future arrangements will be for the research and publication of local labour market and economic assessments. Before April 2001, if you have difficulty contacting a TEC (or Business Link) or obtaining the sort of research outputs we discuss in this report, you should contact the HEFCE Regional Consultant, Regional Development Agency or your Government Regional Office for advice, as they will each have an understanding of local arrangements. (*Contact details are provided in Annex B.*)

The new local Learning and Skills Councils will be taking forward some work currently undertaken by TECs, but we don't yet know what their role may be in the production of local labour market reports.

5.2.1 Regionally and locally produced LMI: Essential

TEC economic and/or labour market assessments. The periodicity of these publications varies from one per year to one every three years, depending upon the TEC in question. The titles can be very confusing; *eg* some have titles like 'Prospects'. Occasionally it can be difficult obtaining somebody on the telephone who will be able to handle a query about a labour market or economic assessment, but generally headway can be made by asking for staff involved in either research, information, marketing or development.

The basic research and analysis that results in an annual assessment normally costs more than £100,000, and the publication, printing and handling costs per report can easily be in excess of £10 each, so some TECs now charge for such publications. Where a charging policy exists, however, there can sometimes be negotiation and bartering. Generally we would view a cover price in excess of £30 as being hard to justify unless it is detailed, high quality and up-to-date report, with plenty of statistical appendixes.

TEC sectoral reports. These are a very mixed bag, but contain the hidden gems of TEC commissioned research. Often produced by locally-based experts in a particular industry, and based upon case study style research with local employers of that sector, some of these reports are first class and of direct use to higher education. There are examples of provision within higher education being directly influenced by such TEC research, indeed more so than the general market assessments we discuss above.

TEC sectoral reports may be formally published and identifiable from a list of publications, but they are sometimes launched or simply 'drip fed' into the local area — it is always worth finding out what specifically sectoral research the TEC has commissioned and produced a report on. This is the type of material that can form the basis for a useful discussion between an HE planning department and the relevant academic department, being sufficiently detailed for the academics but sufficiently accessible for the generalist planners to absorb and discuss the implications.

The **Regional Economic Strategy** and **Regional Skills Strategy** produced by your **Regional Development Agency** will contain useful LMI and economic intelligence, albeit that they are not intended as research reports. Currently being circulated in draft, as 1999 is the first year in which such reports are being produced, it is too early to say what common features they possess. However, as a starting point they ought to be referenced and provide leads into other regional level reports concerning labour market and other related issues.

The **Lifelong Learning Plans** of your local **Lifelong Learning Partnership** (or partnerships, as some cover quite small areas) should also include LMI and quite detailed information on participation in and attainment from education by local people. As with the Regional Economic Strategies referred to above, 1999 is the first year in which such plans are being produced, and so it is too early to know what common features exist between them.

The **ONS (Office for National Statistics)** produces a rolling series of **Regional Profiles**, which summarise all relevant data (including labour market data) for the region. These are available from ONS. They are a very useful reference material and can be drawn on swiftly to provide statistical evidence for reports and papers concerning regional or local issues.

There can be useful **HEI collaborations** at regional level to take forward such work: the CONTACT project based in the North West is one example, or in the North East there is the 'Universities for the North East Graduate Labour Market' project. Where such collaborations exist they are probably the most useful single means of accessing and influencing the production of relevant LMI for your local or regional area.

5.2.2 Other regionally and locally produced LMI

Government Regional Offices commission and publish occasional reports on labour market and economic issues. However, each region has its own arrangements and there is therefore no standard report to refer to. It is worth contacting the Government Regional Office (GROs) in your area and enquiring whether any research reports have been produced or published. It can take a few calls, as different parts of GROs do not always know if another part has produced a report. Generally it is useful to start in that part of the GRO dealing with DfEE issues, such as skills, learning policy and enterprise.

Consortia of TECs, local authorities, RDAs and others have variously combined in some parts of the country to pool regional level LMI or intelligence. Arrangements differ in each part of the country, for example in London there is the London TEC Council, which produces some rather policy-orientated research reports that might be of some interest to HE, and its skills unit produces competent summaries of lower to medium level skills issues. As an alternative source, the London Chamber of Commerce is the business-orientated source of regional intelligence on the capital and its labour market. In the South East region the TECs are planning to set up a joint intelligence unit with the RDA, although currently there are no details available.

TEC survey reports are generally not going to be of particular use, for example some publish the findings of household and employer surveys. A good market assessment should in any event have distilled all the relevant findings of surveys.

Annex A: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

AES	Annual Employment Survey (of ONS)
AGR	Association of Graduate Recruiters
CIHE	Council for Industry and Higher Education
CSU	Higher Education Careers Services Unit
CVCP	Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals
DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ED	Enumeration District (for Census of Population)
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ES	Employment Service
ESF	European Social Fund
FDS	First Destinations Survey (of HESA)
FE	Further Education
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council (England)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
GO or GRO	Government Office/Government Regional Office
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council (England)
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
ILO	International Labour Organisation (*eg* ILO definition of unemployment)
JSA	Jobseekers Allowance
LAD	Local Authority District
LEA	Local Education Authority
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LLLP	Local Lifelong Learning Partnership
LLSC	Local Learning & Skills Council (local bodies, proposed)

LMI	Labour Market Information
LSC	Learning and Skills Council (national body, proposed)
NES	New Earnings Survey (of ONS)
NOMIS	National Online Manpower Information System
NTO	National Training Organisation
NTONC	National Training Organisations National Council
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
ONS	Office for National Statistics
RDA	Regional Development Agency
RES	Regional Economic Strategy (of an RDA)
SEN	Skills & Enterprise Network (of the DfEE); (or Special Educational Needs)
SEU	Social Exclusion Unit
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification
SME	Small and Medium (Sized) Enterprise
SOC	Standard Occupational Classification
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
SWOT	Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats
TEC	Training and Enterprise Council (to April 2001)
TTWA	Travel-to-Work Area
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
WERS	Workplace Employee Relations Survey (DTI survey)
YCS	Youth Cohort Study (of DfEE)

Annex B: Useful Contacts

Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR)
Innovation Centre, Warwick Technology Park, Gallows Hill, Warwick CV34 6UW
Tel: 01926 623 236 Fax: 01926 623 237
http://agr.csu.man.ac.uk

The Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE)
344-354 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8BP
Tel: 0171 833 9712 Fax: 0171 833 9710
www.cihe-uk.com

Careers Services Unit (CSU Limited)
Prospect House, Booth Street East, Manchester, M13 9EP
Tel: 0161 277 5200 Fax: 0161 277 5210
www.prospects.csu.ac.uk

Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (CVCP)
Woburn House, 20 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HQ
Tel: 0171 419 4111 Fax: 0171 388 8649
www.info@cvcp.ac.uk

CRE (Commission for Racial Equality)
Elliott House, 10-12 Allington Street, London SW1E 5EH
Tel: 0171 828 7022 Fax: 0171 630 7605
www.open.gov.uk/cre/crehome.htm

DfEE (Department for Education and Employment)
Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT
Tel: 0870 001 2345
www.dfee.gov.uk
Publications from DfEE Publications, Tel: 0845 602 2260

Department of Health
Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London SW1A 2NS
Tel: 0171 210 3000
www.doh.gov.uk

Department of Social Security
Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London SW1A 2NS
Tel: 0171 238 0800
www.dss.gov.uk
Publications from The Stationery Office, Tel: 0870 600 5522

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
DTI Headquarters, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET
Tel: 0171 215 5000 Fax: 020 72222 0612
www.dti.gov.uk

EOC (Equal Opportunities Commission)
Overseas House, Quay Street, Manchester M3 3HN
Tel: 0161 833 9244 Fax: 0161 835 1657
www.eoc.org.uk

FEFC (Further Education Funding Council)
Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry CV1 2WT
Tel: 01203 863 000 Fax: 01203 863 100
www.fefc.ac.uk

FEDA (Further Education Development Agency)
Citadel Place, Tinworth Street, London SE11 5EH
Tel: 0171 840 5400 Fax: 0171 840 5401
www.feda.ac.uk

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)
18 Royal Crescent, Cheltenham GL50 3DA
Tel: 01242 255 577 Fax: 01242 211 122
www.hesa.ac.uk

Higher Education Funding Council (England) — (HEFCE)
Northavon House, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol BS16 1QD
Tel: 0117 931 7317 Fax: 0117 931 7203 (General Office)
www.hefce.ac.uk

NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations)
Regents Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL
Tel: 0171 713 6161 Fax: 0171 713 6300
www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

National Training Organisations National Council (NTONC)
10 Meadowcourt, Amos Road, Sheffield S9 1BX
Tel: 0114 261 9926 Fax: 0114 261 8103
www.nto-nc.org

Office for National Statistics, Government Offices
Great George Street, London SW1P 3AQ
Tel: 0171 270 3000 Fax: 0171 270 6019
www.ons.gov.uk
ONS Sales Tel: 0171 533 5678

Skills & Enterprise Network (free DfEE service)
Tel: 0845 602 2260
www.dfee.gov.uk

Skill (National Bureau for Students with Disabilities)
Chapter House, 18-20 Crucifix Lane, London SE1 3JW
Tel: 0171 450 0620 Fax: 0171 450 0650
www.skill.org.uk

The Stationery Office (formerly HMSO)
Tel: 0870 600 5522
www.tso-online.co.uk

TEC National Council
10th Floor, Westminster Tower, 3 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7SX
Tel: 0171 735 0010 Fax: 0171 735 0090
www.tec.co.uk

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)
PO Box 67, Cheltenham, GLOS GL52 3LZ
Tel: 01242 222 444 (Switchboard) Fax: 01242 221 622
www.ucas.ac.uk

Possible sources of labour market research, consultancy and advice

Please note, this list is illustrative only, and does not reflect the total number of research organisations and consultancies undertaking such work. Very many HEIs will have in-house expertise, for example in business schools, planning, economic or geography departments. Inclusion in the following listing does not constitute a recommendation.

Centre for Labour Market Studies
University of Leicester, 7 Salisbury Road, Leicester LE1 7QR
Tel: 0116 252 5950 Fax: 0116 252 5953
www.clms.le.ac.uk

GHK (Economics and Management)
30 St Paul's Square, Birmingham B3 1QZ
Tel: 0121 212 2880 Fax: 0121 212 0308
Contact: Georgia Siora

HEIST
2 College Close, Beckett Park Campus, Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds LS6 3QS
Tel: 0113 283 3184
www.lmu.ac.uk

Institute for Employment Research (IER)
University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL
Tel: 01203 524 127 Fax: 01203 524 241
www.warwick.ac.uk/ier

Institute for Employment Studies (IES)
Mantell Building, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9RF
Tel: 01273 686 751 Fax: 01273 690 430
Contact Richard Pearson (Director) or Andrew Maginn (Senior Research Fellow)
www.employment-studies.co.uk

KPMG
Quayside House, 110 Quayside, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE1 3DX
Tel: 0191 401 3700 Fax: 0191 401 3751
Contact: John Adams, Director, Higher Education Services
www.kpmg.co.uk

NIACE (The National Organisation for Adult Learning)
21 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE
Tel: 0116 255 1451 Fax: 0116 285 4514
www.niace.org.uk

DTZ Pieda

6th Floor, 26 Cross Street, Manchester M2 7AE
Tel: 0161 839 5107 Fax: 0161 834 2055
www.dtz.co.uk

Policy Research Institute

Leeds Metropolitan University, Bronte Hall, Beckett Park Campus, Leeds LS6 3QS
Tel: 0113 283 1747 Fax: 0113 283 1748
www.lmu.ac.uk/lbs/pri

Prism Research Ltd

Pemberton House, Stafford Court, Telford, Shropshire, West Midlands TF3 3BP
Tel: 01952 290 310 Fax: 01952 290 312
(Contact Philip Rowe)

Responsive College Unit Ltd

Buckingham House, Glovers Court, Preston, Lancashire PR1 3LS
Tel: 01772 885 999 Fax: 01722 887 336

York Consulting

Smithfield House, 92 North Street, Leeds, LS2 7PN
Tel: 0113 222 3545 Fax: 0113 222 3450
email: ycl@yorkconsulting.co.uk
www.yorkconsulting.co.uk

Contact details for English Regional Development Agencies, Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly

Yorkshire Forward

Westgate House, 100 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4LT
Tel: 0113 243 9222 Fax: 0113 243 1088
www.yorkshire-forward.com

One NE RDA (North East)

Great North House, Sandyford Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8ND
Tel: 0191 261 2000 Fax: 0191 232 9069
www.onene.co.uk

Advantage West Midlands

2 Priestly Wharf, Holt Street, Aston Science Park, Birmingham B7 4B2
Tel: 0121 380 3500 Fax: 0121 380 3501
www.advantage-westmidlands.co.uk

South West of England RDA

Sterling House, Dix's Field, Exeter, Devon EX1 1QA
Tel: 01392 214 747 Fax: 01392 214 848
www.swengland.co.uk

East of England Development Agency

Compass House, Chivers Way, Histon, Cambridge CB4 9ZR
Tel: 01223 713 900 Fax: 01223 713 940
www.eeda.org.uk

SEEDA (South East)

Cross Lanes, Guildford, Surrey GU1 1YA
Tel: 01483 484 226 Fax: 01483 484 247
www.seeda.co.uk

North West of England Development Agency

New Town House, Buttermarket Street, Warrington, Cheshire WA1 2LF
Tel: 01925 644 734 Fax: 01925 644 671
www.nwda.co.uk

Scottish Executive

The Mound, Edinburgh EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 5000 Fax: 0131 348 5601 (Public Information)
www.scottish.parliament.uk

Scottish Office

Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh EH11 3XD
Tel: 0345 741 741 (Enquiries) Fax: 0131 244 8240
www.scotland.gov.uk

Welsh Assembly

www.wales.gov.uk

Annex C: Illustrations of Higher Education Sector Data

In this Annex we are reproducing some tables of higher education data used in a recent regional labour market assessment for South East England.

The write-up and analysis of the tables is not repeated here, as it was specific to that report. However, the tables illustrate the types of data (including that of HESA, the Higher Education Statistics Agency) that can usefully be included within a regional or local level labour market assessment.

Table C.1 shows student numbers in a region, according to their age, sex and level of study. Although marked as 'special tabulation', such data is readily available from HESA.

Table C.2 shows the main subject groups being studied by students at universities in one region (the South East) and compares that to the national picture. As with many tables in this section, such data is also available at the level of counties.

Table C.3 examines the ethnic profile of those entering higher education in two regions, (the South East and Greater London) and also provides comparative national data.

Table C.4 shows the main source of financial support for full-time higher education students at various levels, again comparing the regional with the national level. The picture will be very different for some regional and county areas, possibly indicating even more pressing issues concerning student support. The same data for part-time students is shown in **Table C.5**.

Table C.1: Student numbers* in the South East (GOSE) region by level, age and sex, 1996/97

	Postgraduate		First degree		Other undergraduate		Total
Age Group	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Under 21	32	17	26,160	25,077	2,631	2,645	56,562
21 to 24	3,336	3,549	10,890	11,853	2,140	1,907	33,675
25 and over	11,958	10,421	10,190	7,381	15,380	6,457	61,787
Age unknown	150	74	23	17	1,170	472	1,906
All ages	*15,476*	*14,061*	*47,263*	*44,328*	*21,321*	*11,481*	*153,930*

Source: HESA, December Student Population 1996/97, Special tabulation for IES
** UK domiciled students only*

Table C.2: Full-time new entrants*, South East (GOSE) and UK HEIs, by subject and level, 1996/97

	Postgraduate		First degree		Other undergraduate	
Subject group	SE (GOSE) % of total	UK % of total	SE (GOSE) % of total	UK % of total	SE (GOSE) % of total	UK % of total
Medicine & Dentistry	0.1	4.5	0.8	2.3	0.0	0.1
Subjects allied to medicine	5.3	4.4	4.5	5.4	31.4	26.6
Biological Sciences	1.8	4.5	8.0	7.2	1.1	2.3
Veterinary Science	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0
Agriculture & Related Subjects	0.0	0.3	1.0	0.8	0.0	3.7
Physical Sciences	5.7	5.0	6.2	5.7	0.6	1.1
Mathematical Sciences	0.5	0.9	2.3	2.0	0.5	0.3
Computer Science	6.6	6.3	4.2	4.8	9.0	11.6
Engineering and Technology	5.7	7.2	5.4	7.3	7.0	8.6
Architecture, Building & Planning	4.5	5.7	2.0	2.1	3.1	3.1
Social, Economic & Political Studies	8.2	7.5	8.7	8.3	8.3	5.7
Law	1.6	7.8	2.8	3.8	0.0	0.5
Business & Administrative Studies	8.6	9.6	9.6	9.9	19.3	24.3
Librarianship & Information Science	0.5	3.0	2.4	1.6	0.0	0.6
Languages	5.0	4.4	8.5	6.6	0.1	0.1
Humanities	1.4	2.1	6.0	4.1	0.1	0.2
Creative Arts & Design	1.2	2.6	11.3	8.2	11.6	7.3
Education	42.3	23.3	4.9	4.9	1.6	0.6
Combined	0.9	0.7	11.3	14.8	5.6	3.1
All Subjects	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*

Source: HESA, December Student Population 1996/97 special tabulation for IES
** Note: UK domiciled students only*

Table C.3: Ethnicity of new entrants*, South East (GOSE), London and UK HEIs, 1996/97

	SE (GOSE)		London	UK
	No. of students	% of known entrants	% of known entrants	% of known entrants
White	**32,729**	**92.4**	**60.9**	**86.0**
Black Caribbean	205	0.6	5.2	1.5
Black African	306	0.9	8.8	2.1
Black other	95	0.3	1.8	0.6
Black	**606**	**1.7**	**15.9**	**4.2**
Indian	635	1.8	8.2	3.7
Pakistani	217	0.6	3.7	1.9
Bangladeshi	73	0.2	1.7	0.5
Chinese	298	0.8	1.9	0.9
Asian other	331	0.9	3.5	1.2
Asian	**1,554**	**4.4**	**19.1**	**8.1**
Other	**524**	**1.5**	**4.1**	**1.6**
Known	**35,413**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Unknown	8,123	22.9	13.2	15.2
Total	*43,536*	–	–	–

Source: HESA, December Student Population 1996/97, special tabulation for IES
** Note: UK domiciled students only*

Table C.4: Main source of financial support for full-time and sandwich new entrants* to HEIs, South East (GOSE) and UK, 1996/97

	Postgraduate		First degree		Other undergraduate	
	SE (GOSE)	UK	SE (GOSE)	UK	SE (GOSE)	UK
Source	% of total	% of total	% of total	% of total	% of total	% of total
No award or financial backing	25.3	43.8	2.7	3.0	4.2	7.8
UK LEA mandatory/discretionary awards	47.2	27.5	94.4	94.1	58.3	66.5
Institutional waiver of support costs	3.3	3.9	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.4
UK central Govt./local, health, employment and agriculture authorities/bodies	9.6	5.8	1.7	1.2	27.6	18.5
UK industry/commerce & student's employer	2.9	2.6	0.2	0.1	4.6	1.3
Other	11.6	16.4	0.7	1.5	4.7	5.5
Total	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*

*Source: IES analysis of HESA December Student Population 1996/97 Special Tabulation**
Note: UK domiciled students only

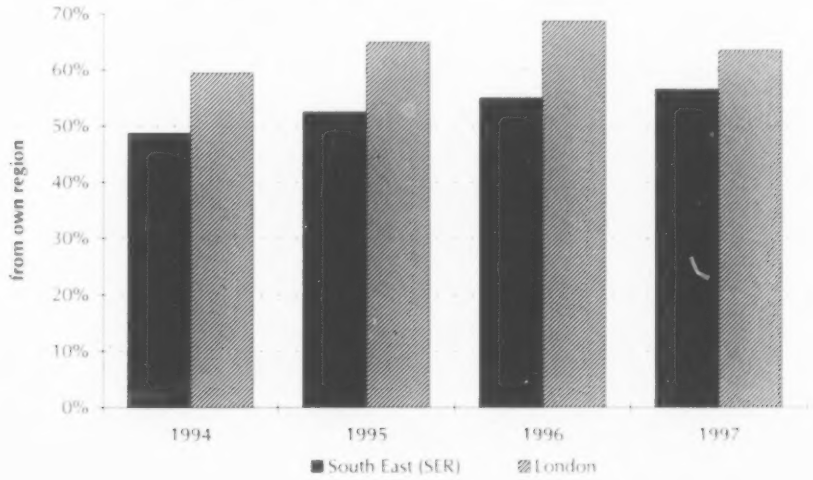
Table C.5: Main source of financial support of part-time new entrants* to HEIs, South East (GOSE) and UK, 1996/97**

	Postgraduate		First degree		Other undergraduate	
	SE (GOSE)	*UK*	*SE (GOSE)*	*UK*	*SE (GOSE)*	*UK*
Source	**% of total**	**% of total**	**% of total**	**% of total**	**% of total**	**% of total**
UK LEA mandatory/discretionary awards	0.6	2.5	1.9	1.2	2.1	2.6
Institutional waiver of support costs	3.6	3.1	1.4	2.1	11.0	2.5
UK central Govt./local, health, employment and agriculture authorities/bodies	19.8	8.5	17.1	7.1	8.8	9.8
UK industry/commerce & student's employer	22.4	28.5	14.7	16.4	9.7	14.7
Other	5.3	10.8	6.0	7.3	4.0	9.6
GOSE Total	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*

Source: HESA, December Student Population 1996/97, special tabulation for IES
** Note: UK domiciled students only. ** includes other non full-time or sandwich students*

With the growing importance of sub-degree level study, it is worth noting that higher education sector data can also be of considerable use here. For example, **Figure C.1** uses UCAS data to examine the trend in 'local study', as measured by the proportion of those people studying for HNDs who attend an institution in their home region. Figure C1 shows the trend for several years in two regions, the South East and Greater London, and we can see a gradual but steady decline in 'inter-regional mobility' for HND study among residents of the South East.

Figure C.1: Trend in local participation by HND accepted applicants, South East (SER) and London, 1994-97



Source: UCAS Annual Reports, Tables E1.1 and E1.2, various years

Table C.6: Place of study by domicile*, all levels of students, full and part-time, 1996/97 (per cent)

Where students hail from *(place of domicile)*	Where people study *(location of institution)* Oxfordshire	Sussex**	Rest of SE (GOSE)***	All SE (GOSE)	London	Rest of UK	All UK
Oxfordshire	30.1	1.7	10.2	42.0	10.8	47.2	100
E & W Sussex	1.8	30.3	13.3	45.4	14.7	39.9	100
Rest of SE (GOSE)	2.9	2.2	26.2	31.3	20.0	48.7	100
All SE (GOSE)	5.5	7.9	21.9	35.3	18.0	46.7	100
London	1.3	1.5	5.5	8.3	64.3	27.4	100
Other UK Regions	1.3	0.7	4.1	6.1	5.8	88.1	100
UK Total	*1.8*	*1.7*	*6.4*	*9.9*	*15.5*	*74.6*	*100*

Source: HESA, December Student Population 1996/97, special tabulation for IES
*Notes: *UK domiciled students only **East & West Sussex & Brighton/Hove*
****GOSE minus Oxfordshire and Sussex, as defined.*

Table C.6 shows how it is possible to mix the geographic level of analysis, in this case between counties (Oxfordshire and Sussex) and regions (South East and Greater London). To illustrate how the Table can be read, we can see that 35.5 per cent of students at HEIs in the South East actually come from that region. In Greater London, almost two-thirds of HEI students (64.3 per cent) come from Greater London. Table C.6 also shows the pull of London on the neighbouring counties, for example one in ten (10.8 per cent) of people from Oxfordshire attending an HEI do so in London.

Table C.7, (drawn from *Universities and Economic Development*, Goddard *et al.*, CURDS, Newcastle, 1998) presents higher education sector data to analyse the differences between new and old universities, at a regional level. Table C7 shows that graduates of new universities are more likely to be unemployed, but that those graduating from new universities in more prosperous regions (*eg* South East) are less likely to be unemployed than graduates of old universities in less prosperous regions (*eg* North East).

From the same source, **Table C.8** shows the relative importance of new and old universities as the source of graduates in each region. New universities are shown to be a far more significant source of graduates in some regions (*eg* the North East) than the are in others (*eg* East Anglia and the East Midlands).

Table C.7: Unemployment record of local and non-local graduates (% unemployed as % of total graduates)

Standard economic region	Local		Non-local	
	Old university	New university	Old university	New university
North East	8.6	12.9	6.9	10.3
Yorkshire and Humberside	8.3	11.7	9.2	8.9
East Midlands	5.3	11.7	3.9	10.5
East Anglia	6.6	10.9	7.6	8.9
South East (SER)	5.9	7.3	6.6	9.0
Greater London	9.1	13.4	6.5	9.5
South West	5.6	11.5	4.9	10.6
West Midlands	5.4	10.6	4.3	9.9
North West	8.9	11.4	7.8	13.0
England	**9.2**		**8.3**	

Source: Goddard et al., 1998 Universities and Economic Development: Table 6.4, p20

Table C.8: Local graduates as a percentage of university graduates

Standard economic region	Old university	New university
North East	23.3	53.3
Yorkshire and Humberside	22.6	39.0
East Midlands	19.5	28.0
East Anglia	25.9	29.6
South East	47.2	47.8
Greater London	41.9	53.4
South West	27.5	48.4
West Midlands	25.3	47.9
North West	33.8	52.9
England	**29.8**	**40.6**

Source: Goddard et al., 1998 Universities and Economic Development: Table 6.3 (b), p20

Looking in more detail at graduate prospects, **Table C.9** uses HESA's First Destinations Survey (FDS) at a regional level. It shows that likelihood of graduates to obtain their first job in the same region they graduated in. To illustrate, only about on in five graduates from South East HEIs who originated from the North West actually return to the North West for their first job. The South West appears rather better at repatriating its 'intellectual capital', with about a third of 'South Westerners' who study at South East HEIs returning to their home region to begin their careers. Such data are very complex and require careful analysis, but they are potentially of great significance for policy makers at regional level and for HEIs.

Table C.9: Region of initial employment of undergraduates from South East (GOSE) institutions by standard economic region of domicile, 1996/97 (govt. office region)

Where students hail from (standard economic region)	Region of first job as a graduate (%)					
	Own region	South East	Greater London	Unknown	Other regions	Total %
North	16.0	23.2	15.2	36.8	8.8	100
North West	22.0	23.4	17.3	30.6	6.7	100
Yorkshire & Humberside	21.1	26.7	12.0	31.1	9.1	100
West Midlands	27.9	24.8	11.1	29.3	6.9	100
East Midlands	21.8	23.3	12.1	32.6	10.2	100
South West	33.4	23.4	11.1	28.6	3.5	100
East Anglia	26.9	25.3	12.6	30.0	5.2	100
South East	–	51.1	10.5	33.6	4.8	100
Greater London	–	14.3	47.2	35.7	2.8	100
Chan. Islands & Isle of Man	42.1	19.3	5.3	28.1	5.2	100
Wales	27.8	23.3	13.5	26.1	9.3	100
Scotland	14.5	18.4	32.9	19.7	14.5	100
Northern Ireland	20.6	25.4	15.9	25.4	12.7	100

Source: HESA, Special tabulation for IES of the FDS Data Return 1996/97

Table C.10 shows a direct link between the prospects of being an unemployed graduate and coming from a relatively deprived area. Within the South East for which the data is broken down, it is students who came from areas with relatively high unemployment who were most likely to be unemployed upon graduation.

Table C.11 shows at a broad level the relative significance of different sectors in generating graduate employment opportunities. Although the data is only provided for one year, (1996/97), over time such data could show trends and this would be an invaluable aid for those studying labour market dynamics in particular regions.

Table C.10: First destinations of graduates, South East, London and UK, 1996 (per cent)

Where graduates hail from (domicile)	Employment	Undertaking study or training	Not available for employment or training	Assumed to be unemployed	Others
Berkshire	74.0	15.4	4.6	5.4	0.7
Buckinghamshire	71.1	16.6	5.7	5.7	0.9
East Sussex	68.6	17.9	5.2	6.4	1.9
Hampshire	72.0	16.2	4.2	6.5	1.1
Isle of Wight	72.5	11.9	4.9	9.7	1.0
Kent	69.0	17.8	4.5	7.6	1.2
Oxfordshire	70.6	18.2	4.8	5.5	1.0
Surrey	71.5	16.9	5.0	5.5	1.1
West Sussex	72.0	15.7	4.9	5.8	1.6
SE (GOSE)	71.1	16.8	4.8	6.2	1.2
Greater London	64.7	20.3	4.6	9.0	1.4
UK	66.6	20.5	4.1	7.5	1.4

Source: IES analysis of the HESA Student Record July 1996 and First Destination Supplement December 1996

Table C.11: Initial sector of employment (first degree) graduates* from South East institutions and all UK institutions, 1996/97

	South East		UK	
	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture and forestry	78	0.5	1,019	0.7
Fishing	2	0.0	30	0.0
Mining and quarrying	55	0.4	893	0.6
Manufacturing	1,641	11.3	15,874	10.8
Electricity, gas and water supply	133	0.9	1,554	1.1
Construction	277	1.9	2,426	1.6
Wholesale & retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles & personal & household goods	1,453	10.0	13,095	8.9
Hotels and restaurants	473	3.3	4,062	2.8
Transport, storage and communication	597	4.1	5,659	3.8
Financial activities	1,149	7.9	9,599	6.5
Property devt, renting, business and research activities	3,074	21.2	26,861	18.2
Public administration and defense; social security	708	4.9	8,425	5.7
Education	1,460	10.1	27,212	18.5
Health and social work	2,250	15.5	20,724	14.1
Other community, social and personal service activities	994	6.9	8,000	5.4
Private households with employed persons	29	0.2	137	0.1
International organisations and bodies	8	0.1	80	0.1
Unknown	127	0.9	1,738	1.2
Total	*14,508*	*100*	*147,388*	*100*

Source: HESA, Special tabulation for IES of the FDS Data Return 1996/97
**Note: UK domiciled only*

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Labour Market Information for Higher Education Institutions: a Guide

A Maginn, S Dench

This guide is written for two groups of people.

First, it is for people in higher education institutions (HEIs) who use or would like to use regional and local labour market information in planning activity. It will be of particular use to those involved in strategic, operational and business planning.

It is also designed for agencies who commission and produce regional and local labour market, skills, and economic reports, eg RDAs. It will help inform the dialogue between such bodies as RDAs, HEFCs (and their successors in Learning and Skills Councils) and the HEIs of their region.

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£15.00

ISBN 1-85184-292-6

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